STORIES RETOLD FOR INDIAN STUDENTS

QUENTIN DURWARD

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

ABRIDGED AND SIMPLIFIED BY

C. W. STEWART, M.A. (Oxon.)

WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

HUMPHREY MILFORD
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STORIES RETOLD

FOR

INDIAN STUDENTS

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QUENTIN DURWARD

The object of this series of Stories Retold is to provide suitable alternative readers for the higher classes in Indian Secondary Schools, and incidentally to introduce Indian students to the great English authors in such a manner as to overcome discouragement and to stimulate interest.

The stories are not merely abridged, but largely re-written, and the need of explanatory notes has been obviated by the omission of such allusions, idioms, and terms as are only hindrances and stumbling-blocks to schoolboys.

The Series is intended to comprise not only those works which are already known and used in Indian education, but to bring within the reach of the High School pupil a number of standard English stories the nature and difficulty of which would otherwise have made them unsuitable.

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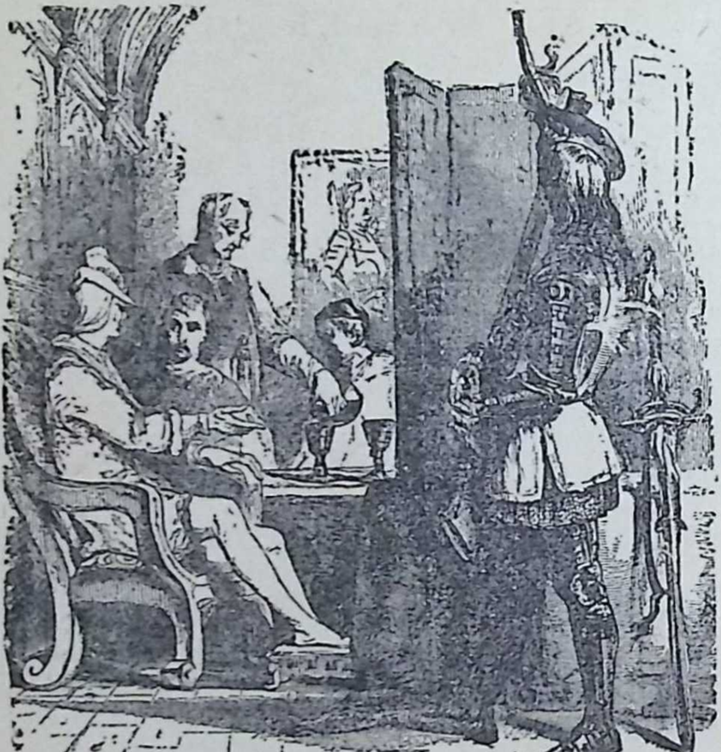
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QUENTIN AS SENTINEL

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QUENTIN DURWARD

INTRODUCTION

Quentin Durward describes the adventures of a young Scotchman in France during the reign of Louis XI. This king came to the throne towards the end of the fifteenth century, when France was threatened by many dangers: the English had captured her fairest provinces, and there were quarrels and disturbances within her own borders.

The system of government in France was the Feudal System. The French princes and nobles possessed estates given to them or to their ancestors by the king, and it was their duty, in return for these gifts, to help the king in war and to obey him in times of peace. Just as the king commanded the services of the most powerful nobles, so they in turn controlled men whose rank was lower than their own. Every man had a feudal lord or superior, who protected him and whom he had to obey.

But in Louis XI's reign the rules of the Feudal System were often broken. The strongest nobles did not hesitate to oppose the king, even with arms: they ruled their provinces and estates as if they were kings themselves and not subjects of the king of France. The duke of Burgundy, a rich province in eastern France, was the chief of these rebellious nobles: he possessed, besides Burgundy, the finest part of Flanders, and was so wealthy and powerful that his army was as strong as that of king Louis himself. The lesser nobles also defied the laws so far as they dared: they turned their estates into little kingdoms, and ruled over them like tyrants; they treated the inhabitants with the utmost cruelty, murdering, robbing, and committing the wildest crimes.

There was another evil besides these. During the long wars between the French and the English, rogues and vagabonds flocked to France from other countries. They formed themselves into bodies of soldiers under their own officers, and sold their services to anyone who would

pay them. If no one hired them, they made war on their own account: they seized castles, to which they retired if they were pursued; they made rich people prisoners, and would not release them until a ransom was paid; they extorted tribute from the villages. For these reasons they were feared and hated throughout the country.

France was suffering these woes when Louis XI ascended the throne. He was a man of evil character, but he fought against the abuses that were ruining France, and to a great extent he overcame them.

Louis was ready to use any means to increase the power of France. He was cunning, spiteful, and cruel; and if he thought a base or treacherous action would help him, he did not hesitate to commit it. Everyone feared him because no one knew what his purposes were or what he would do next. He often disguised himself and moved about unrecognized among his subjects: in this way he found out what people really thought of him, and he frequently raised men of low birth to high positions, if they seemed likely to be useful. He hated to spend money; his clothes were generally shabby, and his court was far less magnificent than those of the great nobles; but he would give away large sums if he could bribe an enemy. He prayed constantly to the saints, promising them rewards if they would pardon his sins; but though he pretended to repent, he never changed his ways.

Louis behaved basely before he came to the throne. He was an ungrateful and rebellious son, conspiring against his father and even making open war on him. He was exiled, and fled to the duke of Burgundy, who protected him until his father's death.

At the very beginning of his reign Louis was almost overpowered by a league of the chief nobles headed by Charles, son of the duke of Burgundy. They besieged Paris with a powerful army. A battle, in which Louis showed great bravery, was fought at Montl'héry under the very walls of the city, and though neither side could claim a victory, the king was in danger of losing his crown. But Louis was cunning enough to foil his enemies: he delayed making terms until they grew tired and withdrew their troops from the siege; and he managed to make the leaders so jealous of each other that they broke up

their alliance. His position, however, was still insecure: the league against him might be renewed, and a still worse danger was the growing power of Charles, who had succeeded his father as duke of Burgundy, and was one of the greatest princes in Europe.

Charles, duke of Burgundy, was called the Bold because of his great, and sometimes rash, courage. His ambition was to make Burgundy a separate kingdom, independent of France. He was entirely different from Louis in character: the latter was calm and deliberate, the former passionate and impetuous. Louis plotted and bribed to obtain his purpose without danger: Charles was too impatient to use such methods; he made no attempt to deceive his enemies but challenged them openly; and he loved the dangers that his actions courted.

Although Louis and Charles were near relations, and in spite of the protection that Louis had received from Burgundy, and the fact that he had spared Charles's life in the battle of Montl'héry, each despised and hated the other. Charles scorned Louis's cautious behaviour, and hated him for the secret support he gave to the discontented citizens of the great towns in Flanders. These unruly cities, encouraged by the French king, frequently opposed Charles, although he was their feudal lord.

Louis, on the other hand, thought Charles rash and stupid, but he had to submit to insults from him that he was not strong enough to punish. He also feared the duke: Burgundy was a wealthy province, and its large population was warlike and well trained for fighting; further, Charles the Bold attracted to his court many brave men who were fond of wild and daring enterprises.

Quentin Durward's adventures began about the year 1468. The feuds between Louis and Charles were then at their height: the two princes pretended to be friendly, but each was ready to break the truce at the first favourable opportunity.

CHAPTER I

THE WANDERER

Upon a delicious summer morning a youth approached the ford of a small river near the castle of Plessis. The castle belonged to Louis XI, the king of France; it stood in a plain so rich that it was called the Garden of France, and its dark battlements rose over an extensive forest.

As the traveller neared the river, his movements were watched by two men who stood on the opposite side of the stream. He seemed to them to be about nineteen years old, and made a handsome figure, though his face and dress showed that he was not a native of the country. His short grey cloak was unlike any made in France, and his blue bonnet, with a sprig of holly and an eagle's feather, was certainly Scotch. He carried a stout pole, and wore on his hand a strong glove for hunting with hawks. Although not yet fully grown, he was tall and agile, and strode along with a light step. His complexion was fair, his features frank and pleasing; and his bright blue eyes and smiling mouth gave him a merry, good-humoured look.

While the youth was descending the rugged bank to the water's edge, the younger of the two men on the opposite side said to his companion: 'It is our man: it is Mag-raubin, the gipsy! I cannot see his face, but I recognize him. If he tries to cross the ford, he is lost: the water is up, and the ford is impassable. Hark, sir, he is shouting to know whether the water is deep.'

'Let him discover that himself,' said the other: 'it may save us a rope.' But when the young man entered the stream, he called to him to beware, and said to his friend: 'By Heaven, you have made a mistake: this is not the man we expected.'

The warning to the traveller came too late: he either did not hear at all, or was already in deep water before he heard. The river was deep and swift, but the youth was a strong swimmer.

He is a fine fellow,' said the elder man. 'Run, friend, and help him if you can.'

His comrade hurried down to the shore, but the handsome Scot reached the bank without his help. 'Uncivil dog!' cried the youth angrily, 'why did you not answer when I shouted to you? I will teach you the respect due to strangers!'

As he said this, he flourished his pole. His opponent laid hand upon his sword, but the elder stranger, coming up, commanded him to wait, and accused the traveller of plunging rashly into the swollen flood and of quarrelling with a man who was hastening to help him. 'You seem a foreigner,' he added, 'and you should remember that you speak our language in a way that is not easy to understand.'

The youth, hearing himself reproved by an elderly, respectable man, lowered his weapon and said, 'I am sorry, sir, if I have done you both injustice. After all, I do not much mind the bath I have had. Kindly direct me to some place where I can have my clothes dried.'

'For whom do you take us, young man?' asked the elder stranger.

'For wealthy citizens,' said the youth. 'You, master, may be a money-dealer, and this man a butcher.'

'A good guess!' said the other, smiling. 'My business is indeed to trade in money: and my friend's work is something like a butcher's. Your clothes shall be dried; but I must first know who you are and to what place you are going, for in these times the roads are full of dishonest travellers.'

The young man glanced keenly at the speaker and his silent companion as if doubtful whether to trust them. The elder, and more remarkable, of the two men looked like a merchant or shop-keeper. His jacket, stockings, and cloak were all of a dark colour, and were worn threadbare; his dress was short and fitted closely to his body, while he wore on his head a low fur cap. His features were strong, and in spite of his hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, his expression was shrewd and humorous. He seemed a person accustomed to command, and his deep-set eyes, peering from under thick, black eyebrows, threatened evil to anyone who disobeyed him. The young stranger was

impressed by his looks, and was surprised that he wore such shabby clothes.

His comrade was a stoutly built man of medium size, with a grim face and a very evil smile. He was armed with sword and dagger, and wore under his plain coat a shirt of chain-armour.

The young man decided to trust the strangers, and answered after a moment's pause, 'I am a Scotchman, and I have come to seek my fortune in France.'

'Bravo!' said the elder stranger. 'You seem a fine young fellow. I am a merchant, and want a lad to help me in my trade. Will you join me?'

'I thank you for your kind offer, sir,' answered the youth, 'but I am afraid I should be altogether unfit for your service.'

'What!' said the stranger. 'Perhaps you know better how to draw back a bow than how to draw up a bill, and can manage a sword more easily than a pen?'

'I am a bowman,' the young Scot replied; 'but, besides that, I have been in a convent where the monks taught me to read and write.'

'Magnificent!' said the merchant. 'Man, you are a wonder!'

The youth was annoyed by his new friend's joking, and said, 'Farewell, master, I have stood here, answering questions, long enough, and must go and dry myself.'

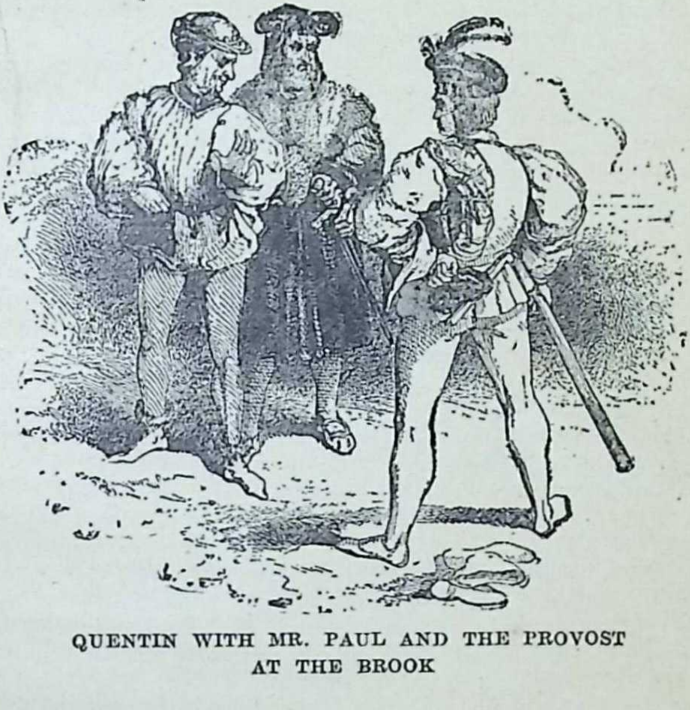
The merchant laughed and answered, 'You are proud, like all Scots: but come, youngster, I have traded in Scotland, and respect its people. If you will accompany me to the village, I will give you a good breakfast. But what, in Heaven's name, are you doing with a hunting-glove on your hand? Do you not know that this is royal land, where no hawking is permitted?'

'I was taught that lesson,' answered the youth, 'by one of the duke of Burgundy's foresters. I only flew my falcon at a heron, and the rogue shot my bird with an arrow.'

'What did you do?' asked the merchant.

'I beat him nearly to death,' the youngster replied.

'Do you know,' said the merchant, 'that if you had fallen into the duke of Burgundy's hands, he would have hanged you?'



QUENTIN WITH MR. PAUL AND THE PROVOST
AT THE BROOK

'Yes, I am told he is as prompt as the king of France at that sort of work. But as I was near the frontier I jumped across and laughed at him. If his forester had not been so hasty, I might have taken service with him.'

'He will have need of such a fine fellow as you, if his truce with Louis is broken,' said the merchant.

'My masters,' said the young Scot firmly, 'you will not find jesting at my expense a safe pastime. I do not like being treated as a child, when I am man enough to give you both a beating if you provoke me too far.'

The elder man laughed at this reply until he seemed likely to choke, while his companion's hand stole to his sword. The youth, seeing this, dealt him a blow across the wrist.

The merchant laughed again but cried to the young man to stop, adding sternly, 'Let us have no more violence, my friend: I am not used to such treatment, and my comrade has had enough. Tell me your name.'

'My name is Quentin Durward,' said the youth; 'I am a gentleman, and hope to be a soldier.'

'A true Scot!' said the merchant. 'Brave, proud, and, I wager, poor. Friend,' he added to his comrade, 'go before us and order breakfast.'

His friend started at a quick pace: the elder man and young Durward followed more slowly, and entered a wood of tall trees mixed with thick shrubs. The undergrowth was cut by long avenues, and Quentin Durward could see herds of deer in the distance.

'You asked me if I could draw a bow,' he said to his companion. 'Give me a bow and two arrows, and I will kill a deer for you.'

'Take care, my young friend,' the merchant replied: 'the deer are under the charge of my late comrade, and he is a strict keeper.'

The stranger spoke as if his meaning was unpleasant, and a slight smile curled his lips. 'I have heard of robbers,' Durward thought: 'perhaps this old rascal is leading me to a place where his comrade will murder me. I will be on my guard.'

They came presently to a chapel in the wood, and the stranger knelt humbly and prayed. When Quentin saw this, he blamed himself for his suspicions.

Leaving the chapel, they proceeded along a path towards the village. 'We are now near the royal castle,' said Quentin's companion, 'and every yard of ground except this path is dangerous. There are traps armed with knives and spikes, and pits in which you might be buried for ever.'

'If I were the king of France,' said the young man, 'instead of setting traps, I would try to govern so well that no man would dare to come near my dwelling with a bad purpose.'

'Hush!' cried the stranger. 'The very leaves of the trees are like ears by which the king hears all that is spoken.'

'I care little for that,' answered Quentin Durward: 'I am bold enough to speak my mind to king Louis himself, God bless him!'

CHAPTER II

THE CASTLE

While Durward and his new friend were speaking, they came in sight of the whole front of the castle of Plessis. The times were so dangerous that great men had to live in fortified places, but this castle was defended with even more care than was then usual.

Quentin Durward halted with his companion at the edge of the wood, and gazed upon the place with interest.

The castle was surrounded by three walls, placed one behind another and defended by towers. A deep ditch, filled with water, ran round the foot of each wall. The castle itself rose behind these defences, far more like a prison in appearance than a palace. The buildings were of dark brick, and their windows opened onto an inner and enclosed courtyard. In the centre the great tower of the castle rose high into the air. There was only one entrance, a gateway in the outside wall with a strong tower on either side. A bridge led across the moat to this entrance, but Quentin noticed that it was raised, and the gate itself closed by a heavy grating.

'Have you ever seen so strong a fortress, young man?'

asked the merchant. 'Do you think there are men bold enough to storm it ?'

The colour rose in Quentin's cheek as he replied, 'It is a strong castle, and strongly guarded: but nothing is impossible to brave men.'

'Would you attempt such a deed ?' asked his companion.

'My father,' answered young Durward, 'has done acts as daring, and I trust that I am a worthy son.'

'If you made the attempt,' said the other, 'you would meet your own countrymen. Those walls are defended by the Scotch Archers who guard king Louis, three hundred gentlemen of high birth.'

'If I were king Louis,' replied the youth, 'I would trust my safety to the three hundred Scotch gentlemen, throw down the walls, fill up the moats, and invite all the nobles of the land to feasts and dances.'

His companion smiled and, turning his back on the castle, led the way along a broad and beaten track. 'This path,' he said, 'goes to the village of Plessis, where you will find an inn: but perhaps you have a friend to see in this part ?'

'I have indeed,' answered Durward, 'my mother's own brother: his name is Ludovic Lesly.'

'I know him,' said the merchant: 'he is in the Scottish Guard, a good fellow and a fine soldier. I may be able to help you to meet him. I will wager that you yourself would like to serve in the Guard with your uncle.'

'I once thought of it,' said the young Scot carelessly, 'but I love the open air too well to be shut up in a castle like a bird in a cage. Besides,' he added in a lower voice, 'I saw just now a man in a grey jacket like my own hanging from an oak near the castle, and I do not care for such customs.'

'The sight is not a strange one,' said the Frenchman: 'in the autumn, when the nights are long and roads become unsafe, you will see ten or twenty such rogues hanging on that old oak. These, young man, are signs of our sovereign's justice.'

'I would hang them further from my palace if I were king Louis,' said the youth. 'But I think we are coming to the village: let us hasten to the inn, my good friend. And now tell me your name.'

'Men call me Mr. Paul,' answered his companion.

At the entrance of the village Mr. Paul turned aside from the wood, observing to his companion that the inn stood away from the high-road and received only the better sort of travellers.

'I owe you a breakfast,' he said, 'for your wetting, which was caused by my mistake.'

'I had forgotten the wetting,' said the light-hearted young man: 'my clothes are nearly dry; but I will not refuse your kind offer.'

Meanwhile they descended a narrow lane at the end of which a gateway admitted them into the courtyard of a large inn. A lily, the royal crest of France, was carved upon a shield above the door. Nobles who had business at the castle stayed at this inn, for Louis seldom allowed any of his court to reside in the castle itself. In spite of this, no servants were moving about the yard and there was no sign of visitors. An inn is generally a cheerful place, but this one seemed as gloomy as the neighbouring castle.

Mr. Paul opened a side door and led the way into a large room, where a fire blazed on the hearth and a table was set for breakfast. The Frenchman whistled, and the landlord entered. He answered Mr. Paul's 'Good day' with a bow, and proceeded to arrange upon the table an attractive meal.

CHAPTER III

THE BREAKFAST

The breakfast was admirable: Quentin Durward had eaten little for the last two days, and his huge appetite astonished the landlord and amused Mr. Paul.

'You laugh at my appetite,' said the young Scot to his host; 'but you eat nothing yourself.'

'I am doing penance,' said Mr. Paul, 'and may not eat anything before noon except some plums and a cup of water. Landlord,' he added, 'bid the lady bring them to me.'

The inn-keeper left the room, and Quentin exclaimed,

'This is the best meal I have eaten since I left my home in Scotland.'

'The Scottish Archers,' replied Mr. Paul, 'eat a better one every day. Why do you not join them? Your uncle might help you, and I myself have a little influence.'

'Your offer is kind,' Quentin said, 'but I am not content with good food and fine clothes: I want to distinguish myself by brave deeds. King Louis lies in this castle, or only rides from one fortified town to another: he gains cities and provinces by cunning plots and not by fair fighting.'

'Young man,' said Mr. Paul, 'do not judge rashly the actions of sovereigns. Louis saves the lives of his subjects: he does not care about his own. He showed himself a brave man at Montl'héry.'

'But that was a dozen years ago,' answered the youth, 'I should like to follow a high-spirited master who always ventured into the very front of the battle.'

'Then why did you not stay with the duke of Burgundy? He would give you the chance of breaking your bones every day.'

'As I told you,' Quentin replied, 'I beat one of his foresters, and dare not offer him my services.'

'Well,' said Mr. Paul, 'there are plenty of bold men with whom mad youngsters can find service. Why do you not join William de la Marck?'

'What!' exclaimed the youth, 'join the Wild Boar! a captain of thieves and murderers, who would kill a man for his coat, and who slays priests and pilgrims!'

'Then, my young friend,' said Mr. Paul, 'I think you had better become a captain yourself: you are so wise that you will never find a chief fit to command you.'

As he spoke, the door opened and a girl about fifteen years old entered with a tray, on which were placed a saucer of dried plums and a cup of silver curiously engraved. The sight of the maiden at once attracted Durward's attention. Her long black hair was decorated with a wreath of ivy leaves; her features were regular, and her eyes dark. The expression of her face was grave and thoughtful, and it seemed to Quentin that this young and lovely girl had suffered some grief or misfortune.

'Well, Jacqueline,' said Mr. Paul, 'what is this? did

I not ask that your aunt should bring what I wanted? does she think herself too good to serve me?'

Mr. Paul spoke angrily, and his harsh voice had a threatening sound. Jacqueline turned pale and trembled as she answered humbly, 'My aunt is unwell, sir.' Her timid look seemed to arouse some pity in the angry merchant, for he said almost gently, 'I do not blame you, Jacqueline: you are too young to try to deceive me. But few women can be trusted: here is a Scottish gentleman who will tell you the same.'

Jacqueline looked at Quentin Durward as if she wanted his sympathy and support. Turning to the merchant, the youth cried, 'I will fight any man who dares to say that this lady's mind is not as pure and true as her looks are sweet.'

The maiden grew pale and threw a glance full of fear at Mr. Paul, who only laughed. 'You are a foolish young man,' he said, 'and know as little of women as of princes.'

Quentin felt overawed by the words and manner of this extraordinary old man, but he reminded himself that he was a Scotch gentleman of noble blood, and the other a French trader.

Meanwhile Mr. Paul patted Jacqueline's head, and said with a smile, 'This young man will serve me, Jacqueline: you may withdraw.'

Jacqueline vanished, and Mr. Paul, throwing himself into an easy chair, let his dark eyebrows sink over his keen eyes. Presently he raised his head and, looking steadily at Quentin, said, 'That is a beautiful creature: is it not strange that she is a servant at an inn?'

Quentin was disappointed to hear that the lovely girl was only an inn-servant. He was also still curious to know who Mr. Paul really was: the merchant's face was unpleasant, his features pinched, and his dress shabby, and yet he seemed accustomed to give orders and to command respect. Quentin thought he might be a high magistrate of the province.

Mr. Paul now took a large purse from his pocket, and poured a stream of small silver into his drinking-cup. 'You have reason to be thankful to the saints, young man,' he said as he handed Quentin the cup, 'and I advise

you to make a present to them. Stay here until you see your uncle : he will be relieved from guard in the afternoon ; I have business in the castle, and will let him know that he will find you here.'

Quentin was about to refuse Mr. Paul's liberal gift, but the merchant, bending his dark brows and raising his stooping figure with dignity, said, 'No reply, young man ; do as you are commanded.' With these words he left the room.

The young Scotsman was amazed : the cup contained more silver pieces than he had ever in his life seen together. He put the money into his pouch, and called for the landlord in order to restore the silver cup. He determined at the same time to ask him some questions about this liberal and dignified merchant.

When the inn-keeper appeared, he refused to take back the cup. 'It does not belong to me,' he said ; 'I have nothing so fine. It was Mr. Paul's, and he has given it to you.'

'Who is this Mr. Paul,' asked Durward, 'who gives such valuable presents to strangers ? and who is the fellow whom he sent forward to order breakfast ? '

'Why, sir, you should have asked Mr. Paul himself who he is ; but God keep us from a close acquaintance with the other gentleman ! '

'All this is very mysterious,' said the young Scot. 'Who is the young girl who brought food to Mr. Paul ? '

'She is lodging here with her aunt,' replied the landlord.

'And do you usually employ your customers to wait on each other ? ' asked Durward.

'Rich men have their fancies,' the other answered : 'this is not the first time that Mr. Paul has found the way to make gentlefolks serve him.'

The young Scotsman next asked whether he could have a room in the inn for a day or two.

'Certainly,' said the inn-keeper, and led the way up a staircase and along a gallery. He stopped at the end and showed Quentin into a small but very clean room. He then withdrew.

Quentin's room was in a tower, and he could look from the projecting window to left or right along the side of he inn. He found that there was another tower farther

along the wall, similar to his own and with a similar window. This window was half open, and Quentin caught a glimpse of a lute and a veil of green silk. He wondered whether they belonged to the lovely girl who had waited upon Mr. Paul. Keeping himself out of sight he peeped through the curtain of the window, and presently saw an arm take down the lute. The maiden soon began to play, and Quentin listened with delight while she sang a simple song in a sweet voice. When the song came to an end, he could not help showing himself more boldly in an attempt to see the singer. The music instantly ceased and a dark curtain was dropped over the window. At the same moment a servant came to inform him that a gentleman wished to speak with him below.

CHAPTER IV

LUDOVIC LESLY

When Quentin Durward entered the room in which he had breakfasted, he found one of the king's Scottish Archers waiting there.

The Scotch bodyguard had been formed by Charles VI of France, who was opposed by a part of the French nation and could not rely upon the nobles to protect him. The Scotch had already been the allies of France, and there was no danger that the Scotch bodyguard would mutiny because their numbers were too small. The Archers were brave, faithful, and of high birth : the French kings rewarded them with honours and ample pay, and their close attendance on the sovereign gave them dignity. They were handsomely armed and mounted, and were attended by their own servants. An Archer of the Scottish Guard was therefore a person of rank and importance.

Ludovic Lesly, Durward's uncle, was over six feet high, strongly built, with hard features : a large scar ran from his forehead to the tip of his right ear, giving a hideous look to his weatherbeaten face. His dress and arms were splendid : he wore a Scotch bonnet, and was covered from head to foot with the finest armour ; a broad dagger hung by his side, and he carried in his hand a huge sword.

Quentin Durward thought he had never seen a more warlike soldier, but he could not help shrinking a little from his uncle's grim face, when he kissed him and welcomed him to France.

'Well, nephew,' said Ludovic, 'what news do you bring from Scotland ?'

'Little good news, dear uncle,' Quentin replied. 'A neighbouring family attacked our castle a year ago, and my father and my two elder brothers were killed.'

'That was a fierce attack,' said the soldier. 'It is a sad misfortune. What was your own part in this unhappy matter ?'

'I fought with the rest,' said Durward, 'until I received a cruel wound. The enemy spared my life on condition that I should become a monk.'

'A monk !' exclaimed Ludovic, 'why did they want you to become a monk ?'

'In order that I might spend my life in a convent, and have no chance of restoring the fortunes of my family. I entered the convent and learned to read and write. After several months my mother died, and as I was well again and had not yet vowed to be a monk, I obtained the abbot's consent to seek my fortune in the world.'

'That was well,' said his uncle. 'I daresay you have now not much money.'

'Only a few pieces of silver,' replied the youth.

'That is hard,' said Ludovic. 'Now, though I spend all my pay I always have a gold chain or a jewel that I can sell if I need money A bold man can always find wealth in the service of the good king of France.'

'I understand,' said Quentin, 'that the duke of Burgundy keeps a finer court and that there is more honour to be won in his service. They say that the duke strikes hard blows, while the king gains his victories by his ambassadors' speeches.'

'You speak like a foolish boy, nephew,' answered his uncle. 'You think that a king sits on his throne, feasting among his nobles, with a great gold crown on his head, or charges at the head of his troops. But the French king is the wisest of princes: he fights with other men's swords, and hires his soldiers with other men's money.'

'Since I have to serve in a foreign land,' said young

Durward, 'I wish to serve where I may win a name by brave deeds.'

'I understand,' said Ludovic; 'but the duke of Burgundy is a hot-brained fool, and gives neither rank nor lands nor treasures to the strangers who serve him. He keeps those for the people of Burgundy. It is not so in France.'

'But honour cannot be won where there is no risk,' Quentin answered. 'Is it not an easy life, to spend summer and winter behind those battlements, guarding an elderly man whom no one thinks of harming?'

'By Heaven!' cried the soldier, 'the boy has some spirit! But listen: almost every day there is some task to be done by which the king's followers may win both coin and credit.'

His nephew paused, and then said, 'There may be much danger in deeds by which little glory is won. I suppose, uncle, that these tasks are honourable?'

'Do you think,' asked Ludovic sternly, 'that I would recommend to you anything dishonourable? The greatest noble in France would be proud to have performed the deeds that I have done.'

'I do not doubt you, uncle,' said the youth: 'but is it true that the king keeps a poor court here? They say that he is not attended by the great nobles, but takes council in secret with low and obscure men, who have been raised by him to high positions.'

'This is child's talk,' replied his uncle. 'The king acts wisely, whatever he does: and a soldier in search of fortune will not find a better master. But listen! the church bell is ringing: I must hurry back to the castle. Come to the drawbridge to-morrow morning at eight, and ask the sentinel for me. You shall see the king and judge him for yourself. Farewell.'

Quentin, when his uncle had gone, decided to take a walk along the banks of the river he had crossed in the morning. He wanted to collect his thoughts, and consider what he should do next

CHAPTER V

THE GIPSIES

QUENTIN DURWARD had long looked forward to meeting his uncle, of whose bravery he had often heard and whom he had pictured as perfect in all respects: but he had now to confess that he was disappointed. He had been shocked by Ludovic's indifference to the destruction of his kinsmen, and was surprised that he had not offered to help him with money. Ludovic Lesly was a keen soldier, but he was selfish, and habit had made him indifferent to human suffering.

Quentin regretted that he had not asked his uncle who Mr. Paul was: the old merchant looked cross and obstinate, and he spoke sharply, but his actions were generous. Quentin determined to find him and ask advice from him.

While the young Scotchman was occupied with these thoughts, he met a party of peasants. He stopped them and asked them to direct him to Mr. Paul's house: but they knew no one like the person Quentin described.

Quentin walked on and presently saw in front of him some large chestnut trees beside which three or four peasants stood with their eyes fixed on something among the branches. Quentin ran forward and was horrified to see the body of a man, not yet dead, hanging from a branch.

'Why do you not cut him down?' he cried.

One of the peasants, turning a frightened face towards him, pointed to a mark cut upon the bark of the tree. The mark was the same royal lily that Quentin had seen above the door of the inn; but he was now too excited to understand its meaning, and, springing into the tree, he cut the rope by which the body hung.

The peasants seemed terrified at his action and all took to flight. Quentin jumped to the ground, freed the wretched man's neck from the noose, and tried to restore him to life: but it was too late.

Suddenly Quentin heard a wild clamour, and found himself surrounded by a number of men and women of strange appearance. One man seized his arms, while another held a knife at his throat.

'Villain!' cried one of the strangers, 'have you murdered our comrade, and are you now robbing him?'

Knives were drawn on every side but the young Scot answered calmly, 'What do you mean? I have just cut down your friend's body, and am trying to restore his life.'

The men and women now gave way to grief: the men threw dust on their heads, while the women wailed piteously and tore their long black hair. These people, whose like Quentin had never seen, were gipsies: they were of eastern origin, and travelling bands of them first appeared in Europe early in the fifteenth century. Quentin noticed that both sexes wore turbans and caps; the complexions of all were very dark. The chiefs wore silver ornaments and bright scarves, but their legs and arms were bare, and the whole troop had a wretched, dirty look.

Quentin was about to leave them, when the galloping of horses was heard, and the gipsies, who had raised the body of their comrade onto their shoulders, were charged by a party of French soldiers. The gipsies shrieked with terror, threw the body on the ground, and took to their heels. Two, however, were taken prisoners, and the soldiers also seized and bound Quentin. The young Scot looked round for help, and saw to his surprise that the leader of the horsemen was Mr. Paul's mysterious companion.

'John and Michael,' said the grim officer to two of his band, 'these trees are convenient. I will teach these rogues to interfere with the king's justice. Dismount and do your work.'

Quentin had noticed that John and Michael carried ropes with nooses: they now prepared three of these, and Quentin's blood ran cold when he saw that one was intended for his neck. He called loudly to the officer, reminded him of their meeting, and denied any knowledge of the persons with whom he was seized. But the officer took no notice beyond asking a peasant, 'Was that young fellow with these rascals?'

'He was indeed, sir,' the fellow answered, 'he was the first to cut the villain down.'

'That is enough,' said the officer, who was Tristan, the provost, or chief of police. He signalled to John and Michael to proceed with their work, and with a cruel smile

pointed to his arm, which hung in a scarf, disabled by the blow from Durward's staff. Then, ordering his soldiers to follow him, he rode away.

Only two or three of the guard remained behind to help John and Michael. The two executioners were very different: John was a tall, thin, grave man, while Michael was a jolly, round, active, little fellow; but both alike were feared and hated.

As they approached Quentin, he cast a wild look around him. 'Let someone,' he said, 'tell Ludovic Lesly of the Scottish Guard that his nephew is here basely murdered!'

A Scotch Archer was standing by, and he cried to the hangman, 'Take care what you do; if this young man is a Scotchman, I will not allow him to be ill-treated.'

'We must obey our orders, sir,' said John, drawing Durward forward by one arm. But the young Scot, exerting his strength, shook off both John and Michael, and ran to the Archer. 'Help me, countryman!' he said, 'I am innocent: cut the rope that binds my arms, and I will fight for myself.'

The Archer cut the rope with his sword, and Quentin, snatching a spear from one of the provost's men, cried, 'Come on now, if you dare!'

John and Michael whispered together. 'Ride after the provost,' said John; 'I will keep them here if I can. Soldiers, stand to your arms.'

The provost's guard was always jealous of the Scottish Archers, and one of the soldiers said to the hangmen, 'We are strong enough to beat the proud Scots.' John, however, was cautious, and said civilly to the Archer: 'Surely, sir, you have greatly insulted the provost, who was performing the task entrusted to him by the king?'

'Tell me at once,' said the Archer, 'what has this young man done?'

'He cut down the dead body of a criminal,' the hangman answered, 'when the royal lily was marked on the tree.'

'How is this, young man?' said the Archer: 'why did you commit this offence?'

'I will tell you the truth,' answered Durward. 'I saw a man hanging from a tree, and hastened to cut him down. I did not see the lily, and had no idea of offending the king of France.'

'You hear,' said the Archer to the hangman: 'it was entirely a mistake.'

At this moment the hangman Michael returned. 'Wait, John,' he called to his comrade; 'here comes the provost.'

'And here,' said the Archer, 'in good time, come some of my friends.'

As the provost Tristan rode up with his troop on one side, four or five of the Scottish Archers came up on the other, headed by Ludovic Lesly himself.

Ludovic no sooner saw his comrade and Durward than he cried, 'Gentlemen, comrades, help me! It is a young Scottish gentleman, my nephew.'

A fierce struggle seemed likely, but the provost advancing asked Ludovic what right he had to oppose the execution of a criminal.

'You may execute a criminal,' answered Ludovic, 'but you shall not kill my nephew. Besides, we Scottish Archers have the right to be judged by our own captain or by the king himself.'

'But this youth,' said Tristan, 'is not one of the Scottish Guard.'

Ludovic hesitated; then he swore loudly that he had that day made his nephew one of his own servants.

'It is well, gentlemen,' said the provost; 'but I will report the matter for the king's own decision.' So saying he moved away with his troop.

'We must report the matter to lord Crawford, our captain,' said Cunningham, one of the Archers, 'and have the young fellow's name put on the roll.'

'Tell everything to Oliver, the king's barber,' said another Scot. 'He is always a good friend of the Scottish Guard, and will see the king before the provost can. Say we will pay him well.'

'But, gentlemen,' said Quentin, 'I have not yet decided whether I wish to take service with you.'

'Then make up your mind,' said his uncle; 'for if you do not join us, the provost will hang you.'

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW RECRUIT

Quentin mounted a horse belonging to an Archer's servant and rode with his countrymen to the castle. As they approached, the gate was opened and the bridge lowered. They entered one by one, but when Quentin appeared, the sentinels commanded him to halt. Ludovic explained who he was, and he was led, strongly guarded, to lord Crawford.

This Scottish nobleman had been one of the first to join the Archers, and had shown his bravery in many fierce battles. Louis XI, who trusted few people, had great confidence in lord Crawford.

Ludovic and Cunningham, one of the principal Archers, followed Durward and the guard to lord Crawford's room. The young man was deeply impressed by the Captain's noble appearance, as well as by the respect paid him by the Archers, who seemed in awe of few people.

Lord Crawford was tall and thin, and was still very strong in spite of his years. His features were hard, and his face scarred and weather-beaten. He listened carefully while Ludovic explained his nephew's position and humbly asked that lord Crawford would protect him, and at last said, 'How often must I tell you not to quarrel with the people of the country? Still, it was only natural, Ludovic, that you should help your nephew, and if there is a quarrel, I am glad it is with the provost. This boy must suffer no harm: give me the roll, and I will add his name to the troop. Ludovic, see that he learns to use his weapons well, for there is fighting ahead of us.'

'I am indeed glad of it, my lord,' said Ludovic, and the interview ended.

Ludovic invited a score of his comrades to a feast in honour of the new recruit. The meal was a merry one, and lord Crawford himself was present for a part of the time. He told Ludovic that Oliver, the king's barber, who disliked Tristan, had obtained from Louis an order that the provost should make no further attempt to seize Quentin.

Speeches were made and songs were sung. Presently Cunningham rose and cried, 'May the royal banner of France be raised soon!' and the company cheered and shouted.

'You are all true servants of the French crown,' said lord Crawford; 'so I will tell you this: an ambassador has brought an angry message from duke Charles of Burgundy.'

'I saw the count of Crèvecœur's servants at the inn,' said one of the guests. 'They say the king will not admit him into the castle.'

'Of what does the duke complain?' asked another.

'He complains that his frontier is invaded and that the king has lately received under his protection a young countess who fled from Burgundy with her aunt because the duke, who is her guardian, wished her to marry his favourite, Campo-Basso.'

'The two ladies came to the castle this morning in a closed carriage,' said a soldier.

'It is said that they are great ladies, who have been living in secret at the inn for some days; that the king has visited them there more than once; and that they have fled to the castle for fear of the count of Crèvecœur, the duke of Burgundy's ambassador.'

'Then,' said Cunningham, 'I will swear it was the countess whom I heard singing to the lute, as I came through the inner court just now.'

The cathedral bell began to ring for evening prayer, and the guests separated. Young Durward was taken to a small room near his uncle's. He had not missed a word that had been spoken about the Countess. He felt sure that she was the maiden to whose song he had listened at the inn and the lovely girl who brought food to Mr. Paul.

CHAPTER VII

THE AMBASSADOR

The sounding of bugles, as the guards were changed, awoke Quentin at an early hour, and he put on proudly the splendid dress and arms provided by his uncle. When Ludovic saw his nephew, he said, 'Try to prove as faithful and bold as you are handsome. Now follow me to the king's presence.'

They proceeded to the inner court of the palace, where huntsmen were waiting with gallant horses and noble dogs, and entered the audience-hall, where the king was immediately expected.

Quentin was disappointed by the appearance of the court. There were household officers richly dressed and guards finely armed, but the few counsellors present were mean-looking men, obviously persons of low birth promoted for their services to the king. Louis's artful schemes had offended his father's old ministers and they rarely attended his court; nor did Quentin see any of the great French generals or of the younger nobles. A few persons however appeared superior to the rest, and the young Archer asked his uncle who they were.

The most remarkable was the count of Dunois, a relative of the king. He was popular both with the nobles and the people, and Louis loved to see him near him. He was short but very strongly built, with broad shoulders: his features were almost ugly, but no one could doubt that he was high-born and brave. He carried himself boldly: his glance was like an eagle's and his frown like a lion's.

Dunois was walking beside Louis, duke of Orleans, who would succeed to the throne, if the king's son died. Louis the king feared that Orleans might conspire against him, and he would not allow him to leave the court. He also meant to compel him to marry his deformed daughter Joan. The duke of Orleans was a mild and kindly man, but his unhappy circumstances had made him miserable.

Ludovic next pointed out John of Balue, Louis's favourite minister: he was a miller's son, but the king loaded him with rewards and made him cardinal. Cardinal Balue soon

believed that he could get whatever he wanted from the king. He was tall and clumsy, but he was very proud of his figure. Quentin watched him as he swept haughtily through the hall in his crimson dress.

'Is the king aware,' said Dunois to the cardinal, 'that the Burgundian ambassador demands an audience ?'

'He is,' the cardinal answered, 'and here comes Oliver Dain to let us know the royal pleasure.'

As he spoke, a strange person entered. He was a little, pale, thin man dressed in black, who carried a silver basin in his hand and had a napkin on his arm. His face was sharp and quick, but he kept his eyes fixed on the ground while he glided through the room with the stealthy pace of a cat. This was Oliver Dain, generally called Oliver the Devil because of his unscrupulous cunning. He was Louis's barber, and divided the king's favour with cardinal Balue. He now spoke earnestly to Dunois, who instantly left the room.

The doors of the inner apartment were presently thrown open, and king Louis entered. Quentin, like all others, turned his eyes upon him, and then started with amazement for he recognized in the king of France the merchant Mr. Paul. He was still more astonished when the king walked straight towards him.

'Young man,' said Louis, 'I am told you have been quarrelling on your first arrival in France ; but I pardon you as it was chiefly the fault of a foolish old merchant who gave you strong wine with your breakfast. If I can find him, I will make an example of him. Lesly,' he added, turning to Quentin's uncle, 'your nephew is a good lad, though fiery. I love to encourage such.'

Ludovic bowed, and Quentin, recovering from his first surprise, studied the king's appearance more attentively.

Louis was still poorly dressed ; he wore an old dark-blue hunting-dress, and his hatband was ornamented with a dozen cheap little figures of saints, made of lead. But his eyes, which Quentin had before thought twinkled only with the love of gain, now seemed piercing and majestic, as became a powerful monarch.

The princesses of France with their ladies entered the apartment after the king. The unfortunate Joan advanced timidly by the side of her sister ; she was pale and thin,

and looked sickly; her body was bent to one side, and she walked as if she was lame. Her face was plain, and her dress untidy: her timid manner and soft, unhappy eyes showed that she was conscious of her plain appearance.

Louis, who had no love for her, stepped towards her and said, 'Well, daughter, are you ready for a hunting-party this morning?' He then called to the duke of Orleans, 'Approach, sir, and lead your future bride to her horse!'

Orleans hastened to obey, and took the princess's cold fingers in his trembling hand. Both looked unhappy, the duke because he was forced to pretend an affection that he did not feel, and the princess because she saw she was disliked by Orleans, for whose love she longed.

'And now to horse, ladies and gentlemen!' said the king.

'I fear, sir, that I must interrupt your sport,' said the count of Dunois: 'the Burgundian ambassador is outside the castle, demanding an audience?'

'Did you not answer him, as I sent word by Oliver, that I was not at leisure to see him to-day or to-morrow or the next day, but that I will give him an early audience?'

'I said all this,' answered Dunois, 'but yet, sir——'

'Well, man,' the king interrupted impatiently, 'what is it?'

'The ambassador,' said Dunois, 'spoke words that, but for your orders, I would have answered with my sword.'

'Come, Dunois,' said Louis, 'I know that Charles of Burgundy is blunt and fiery, and I do not mind his blustering messages.'

'Sir,' Dunois replied, 'the count of Crèvecœur says that since you refuse him an audience, he will wait till midnight and address you at whatever hour you leave the castle.'

'Then I will stay within the castle to-day, and hold council instead of hunting. Let the dogs be taken back to their kennels.'

'Sir,' said Dunois, 'you will not get rid of Crèvecœur in this way: if he is not given audience, he will fasten his glove to the fence in front of the castle as a sign that his master defies you and declares instant war on you.'

'Is it so?' said Louis, frowning savagely. 'Will my dear kinsman treat me so unkindly? Then, Dunois, we must unfold our banner and sound the battle-cry!'

'We could wish for nothing better, sir!' cried the warlike Dunois, and the guards in the hall clashed their arms.

Louis however reflected that for certain reasons an open breach with Burgundy would be particularly perilous. The king of England was a brother of the duchess of Burgundy, and if Louis and Charles came to blows, he would probably invade France. Besides, Louis could not rely on some of the most powerful nobles whose help he would need in event of war. So, after a deep pause he spoke again. 'God forbid,' he said, 'that I should cause blood to be spilled if I can prevent it without dishonour. Therefore admit the ambassador of Burgundy to my presence.'

Many cheeks reddened with shame at these words, and everyone remained silent.

Trumpets in the courtyard immediately announced the arrival of the count of Crèvecœur, a renowned and fearless warrior. He entered the audience-hall, clothed in a splendid suit of steel armour inlaid with gold. A herald walked before him, bearing a letter, which he offered on his knee to the king.

The ambassador paused in the midst of the hall, waiting for the king to speak. 'Approach, count of Crèvecœur,' said Louis. 'What message do you bring from Burgundy?'

Crèvecœur bowed and then spoke in a loud voice: 'King of France, the mighty duke of Burgundy once more sends you a written list of the wrongs committed on his frontiers by your majesty's officers, and my first question is whether you will make amends for these injuries.'

The king glanced at the duke's letter and replied, 'These matters have already been long before my council. Some of the injuries complained of are in return for those sustained by my subjects; some are affirmed without proof. If there are any others, I will give satisfaction, though the acts were committed against my express orders.'

'I will convey your majesty's answer to my master,' said Crèvecœur; 'but since it is in no way different from your previous replies, I cannot hope that it will help to restore peace and friendship between France and Burgundy.'

'That is as God pleases,' said the king. 'I return so mild an answer to your master's reproaches only for the sake of peace, not because I am afraid of war.'

'The duke's next demand,' said the ambassador, 'is that you will stop your secret dealings with his towns in Flanders, whereby the discontent of his Flemish citizens is inflamed.'

'Say to the duke,' replied the king, 'that I know of no such secret practices; any dealings between my subjects and the cities of Flanders are for the purpose of trade. Proceed with your message.'

'My master further requires you to send back to him without delay Isabelle, countess of Croye, and the countess Hameline, her aunt, since the countess Isabelle, who is my master's ward, has fled here and is encouraged by you to resist him.'

Louis answered scornfully: 'Must I account for the flight of every subject whom your master's fiery temper has driven from his dominions? Who can affirm that these ladies are here? and if they are, who can presume to say that I advised them to fly hither or received them with offers of protection?'

'Sir,' said Crèvecœur, 'I *was* provided with a witness,—one who saw these ladies in the inn at Plessis; saw your majesty in their company, though in the unworthy disguise of a merchant; and received from them in your presence letters to their friends in Flanders. This man came to the duke of Burgundy and told him all.'

'Bring him forward,' said the king. 'Place him before me.'

'You speak in triumph, sir, for you are well aware that this witness no longer exists. When he lived, he was called Magraubin the gipsy. Yesterday, as I have learned, he was executed by a party commanded by your provost, to prevent, no doubt, his repeating here what he told the duke of Burgundy in presence of his council and myself.'

'Now, by all the saints!' cried Louis, 'these accusations are so wild that I laugh, rather than am angry, at them. My provost's guard daily puts to death thieves and vagabonds; and will my hot cousin of Burgundy believe whatever slanders such rogues may tell him? But I have shown enough patience; your sole errand here seems to be

to insult me, and I think you have exceeded your commission.'

'On the contrary, sir,' Crèvecœur replied in a disrespectful tone, 'I have not yet discharged it. Listen, Louis, king of France! Listen, nobles and gentlemen! I, Philip Crèvecœur, in the name of the most powerful prince, Charles, duke of Burgundy, openly tell you, Louis, king of France, that as you have refused to remedy the various wrongs done by you against my master, he defies you. There lies my glove in proof of what I have said.'

So saying, he pulled the glove off his right hand and flung it down on the floor of the hall.

There had been a deep silence during this extraordinary scene, but no sooner had the glove been cast down than there was a general tumult. Dunois, Orleans, old lord Crawford, and one or two others of high rank claimed, each for himself, the right of taking up the glove, while the others in the hall cried, 'Strike him down!' 'Cut him to pieces!' 'Has he come here to insult the king of France in his own palace?'

But Louis stopped the uproar by exclaiming in a voice like thunder, 'Silence, my subjects! do not lay a finger on the man! do not touch his glove! And you, count of Crèvecœur, how dare you risk your life thus? Is your duke different from other princes, since he makes his complaints in so unusual a manner?'

'He is indeed different from the other princes of Europe,' said the fearless count: 'he is nobler, for when not one of them dared to give shelter to you, an exile pursued by your father's bitter revenge, you were protected like a brother by my noble master. Farewell, sir, my mission is discharged.'

So saying the count of Crèvecœur abruptly left the room.

'After him—take up the glove and after him!' said the king. 'I do not mean you, Dunois, nor you, lord Crawford, nor you, Orleans. Cardinal Balue, it is your duty to make peace among princes. Lift up the glove and show the count the sin he has committed in thus insulting a great monarch in his own court and forcing me to bring the miseries of war upon France and Burgundy.'

Cardinal Balue, who did not like his task, lifted the glove as cautiously as if it was an adder, and left the audience-hall to hasten after the count.

To throw down the gauntlet.
To accept the gauntlet.
To beard the lion in his own den.

'I must confess,' said Louis after a pause, 'that the duke has a bold servant in Crèvecœur.'

'There are men as bold,' said Dunois, 'among your French nobles: anyone of them would carry a defiance to Burgundy on the point of his sword, but your majesty will not employ us in a service through which we might win honour for ourselves, for your majesty, and for France.'

'Say rather,' answered the king, 'that I will not give way, Dunois, to your headlong madness, which would wreck France for some petty point of honour. You all know how precious every hour of peace is at this moment, when it is so necessary to heal the wounds of France; yet you would all rush into war on account of the tale of a wandering gipsy or of some stray girl. But here comes the cardinal. Well, my lord, have you brought the count to reason?'

'Sir,' answered Balue, 'my task has been difficult, but I have persuaded the count to stay for twenty-four hours and in the meantime to receive his glove again. He has dismounted at the inn.'

'See that he is nobly cared for at my expense,' said the king. 'Twenty-four hours!' he muttered to himself: 'it is a little time; I shall need skill.' Then speaking aloud, he addressed his courtiers: 'Let us go hunting, my gallant lords! To the forest, gentlemen! To horse! To horse!'

CHAPTER VIII

THE BOAR-HUNT

All the cardinal's experience of the king's disposition did not prevent his making a great mistake on the present occasion. He was vain enough to think that no one but him could have persuaded Crèvecœur to remain at Plessis, and, eager for the king's praise, he pressed his horse near to Louis and tried to make him talk about the events of the morning. This was unwise, for Louis disliked intensely anyone who expected great rewards for small services or who pried into his secrets.

At last the king signed to Dunois, who was riding not far away, to come up on the other side of his horse.

'I came here for sport,' he said, 'but the cardinal wishes me to hold a council of state. He has told me all that Crèvecœur said to him at the castle-gate. Did you not say *all* ?' he added, shooting a keen glance at the cardinal.

Balue trembled as he stammered a reply; for he knew the king suspected him of conspiring with Burgundy.

'To the devil with this talk,' said Louis: 'the boar is away. Lay on the dogs! Ha! Ha! tra-la-la-lira-la!' And his horn rang merrily through the woods as he pushed forward, followed by two or three of his guard, among whom was Quentin Durward.

Louis, though keenly engaged in his favourite sport, found leisure to amuse himself by tormenting cardinal Balue, who pretended to be very fond of hunting but was a bad horseman. The king knew this, and by first exciting and then checking his own horse made that of the cardinal, whom he kept close by his side, start, bolt, rear, and lash out, until it and its rider seemed likely to part company.

Dunois laughed without restraint while the king mildly rebuked the terrified cardinal on his eager passion for the hunt. 'I will no longer keep you back,' he continued, giving rein to his horse.

Balue's horse at once went off at a gallop, and soon left Louis and Dunois behind. The cardinal's position was painful, perilous, and absurd. He had no control over his horse, but clung to its mane with his hands: the animal flew on, overtook the pack, and finally carried its frightened rider past the furious boar itself. Balue set up a cry for help, startling his horse, which sprang aside and threw its rider heavily to the ground. The boar was too hotly pursued to attack Balue, who crawled out of the way and saw the whole hunt dash by him without giving him any help. As the king passed, he glanced scornfully at Balue, who determined to revenge himself for the trick that had been played upon him.

After the hunt had passed, a single horseman rode up and expressed his surprise at finding the cardinal upon the ground without a horse or attendants. The horseman was the count of Crèvecœur: he dismounted and placed cardinal Balue on his horse, saying that he wondered the French court forsook their wisest statesman in such peril.

The ambassador, who already in the morning had urged Balue to take the side of Burgundy, saw he had now a good opportunity for persuading him. The cardinal was flattered by the proposal and was tempted by Crèvecœur's offer of rich rewards. Before the accident at the hunt he had hesitated to betray Louis, but he now resolved to be his enemy. He asked Crèvecœur to leave him, that they might not be seen together, but arranged to meet him in the evening

Meantime Louis followed the wild boar. The track of the first boar was presently crossed by a second, which withdrew most of the huntsmen in its pursuit. The king was glad to see Dunois follow upon this false scent, and looked forward to triumphing over him. The king rode close on the hounds, so that when the first boar turned to bay in a marshy piece of ground, there was no one near it but Louis, who rode boldly up to the huge animal and struck it with his spear. But the blow failed, and as his horse refused to charge a second time, the king advanced on foot, holding a short pointed sword. The boar instantly rushed upon Louis, who prepared to strike it in the chest: but the king's foot slipped on the wet ground and he fell. For a moment his life was in extreme danger, but Quentin Durward, who had heard the king's horn, rode up just in time and pierced the animal with his spear.

Louis rose and, coming to Durward's help, cut the boar's throat with his sword. 'Is it you, my young Scot?' he said: 'you have begun your hunting well. Why do you not speak? You seem to have lost your boldness at the court.'

Quentin felt more awe for his powerful master than confidence in him, and wisely answered that if he dared address his majesty at all, he must ask pardon for his bold behaviour at their first meeting.

'Nonsense, man,' said the king: 'I forgive your boldness for your high spirit and good sense. Help me to my horse. I like you and will do you good.'

The king then sounded his horn which brought up Dunois and several attendants, who complimented him on the slaughter of such a noble animal. Louis in reply made slight mention of Durward's help, but took the chief credit for himself.

'And who,' he continued, 'has seen cardinal Balue?'

All were silent until Quentin answered, 'Sir, I saw his lordship leaving the forest on another horse.'

'Heaven cares for its own,' replied the king. 'To the castle, my lords; we'll hunt no more this morning. You, boy,' addressing Quentin, 'fetch my knife: it has dropped beside the boar. Ride on, Dunois: I will follow instantly.'

As soon as they were alone, Louis asked Quentin, 'Can you tell me who gave the cardinal another horse?'

'I think,' Quentin answered, 'it was the ambassador of Burgundy.'

'Ha,' said Louis. 'Well, be it so: France will match them yet.'

The king then left Quentin and returned with his attendants to the castle.

CHAPTER IX

THE SENTINEL

As soon as Quentin returned to his room, his uncle asked to hear about the hunt, and he had scarcely ended his tale when there was a low tap at the door, and Oliver, Louis's catlike barber, entered the room.

Oliver told Ludovic that the king had been pleased by Quentin's conduct in the hunt and had chosen him for a piece of duty.

'Chosen *him*?' said Ludovic in great surprise: 'chosen *me*, I suppose you mean.'

'I mean precisely what I say,' replied the barber: 'the king has a task for your nephew. Bring your gun, young gentleman, and follow me. You are to be a sentinel.'

'Sentinel!' said Ludovic. 'My nephew is not even an Archer: he is only my servant.'

'Pardon me,' answered Oliver: 'the king enrolled him in the Guard not half an hour since.'

Quentin's heart beat high, for he hoped to have a chance to distinguish himself. He was soon ready and followed Oliver with his gun on his shoulder.

The barber led him by secret stairs and passages into a large gallery hung with tapestry. 'You will keep watch

here,' he whispered : 'the king will give you your orders, and it will not be long before you know why you have been summoned. Farewell, and keep good watch.'

'Good watch!' thought the young soldier as Oliver stole noiselessly away, 'but upon whom and against whom ?'

He passed the time by singing softly some old Scotch ballads, but at two hours past noon he felt hungry and became impatient of his task.

At the opposite ends of the gallery were two large doors, near one of which a sound of music suddenly arose. It seemed to Quentin to be the same lute and voice that he had heard at the inn. He stood still in delight, and remained with his gun shouldered, straining ears and eyes towards the music.

Quentin now felt sure that the hidden singer was not the daughter of the innkeeper, but the disguised and unfortunate countess, for whose sake kings and princes were now about to go to war. His mind was full of a hundred wild dreams when suddenly his weapon was roughly grasped and a harsh voice exclaimed in his ear, 'Ha! by Heaven, sir, it seems you keep sleepy watch here!'

The voice was Mr. Paul's, and Quentin saw with shame and fear that he had permitted Louis, who had probably entered by some secret door, to approach him so close as almost to take possession of his weapon.

In his surprise and acting on impulse, he freed his gun by a violent wrench, which made the king stagger backwards: then, alarmed at his own daring, Quentin shouldered his gun and stood motionless before Louis. The king contented himself with saying, 'Your service of the morning excuses some carelessness in so young a soldier. Have you dined ?'

Quentin, relieved of his fears, answered humbly that he had not.

'Poor lad,' said Louis softly. 'Can you hold out another hour without food ?'

'Four-and-twenty, sir,' answered Durward, 'or I should be no true Scot.'

'Cardinal Balue and the count of Crèvecœur will dine with me to-day in strict privacy,' said the king, 'and something may happen.'

He stopped, and remained silent with a gloomy look. At last Quentin ventured to ask what his duty was to be.

'To keep watch with your loaded weapon ; and if there is treason, to shoot the traitor dead.'

'Treason, sir ! in this guarded castle !' exclaimed Durward.

'Treason can creep through cracks and crevices,' said Louis. 'You silly boy ! there is treason among a king's counsellors. Above all, treason lies hid under the friendly air of a reconciled enemy, such as the count of Crèvecœur. I trust no one. I will keep my eye on that insolent count, and on the cardinal too. When I say, "Forward, Scotland ! ", shoot Crèvecœur dead on the spot.'

'If your majesty distrusts the count,' said Quentin, 'I wonder you allow him to approach you so closely, and in privacy.'

'When I walk boldly up to a growling dog and pat him,' answered the king, 'it is ten to one I soothe him into a good temper : if I show fear of him, he flies at me. The count must not return to his rash master in a resentful humour. I run my risk therefore : I have never hesitated to expose my life for the good of my kingdom. Follow me.'

Louis led his young lifeguardsman to a small room where a dinner-table was laid for three. The room itself and the furniture in it were very plain : a light sideboard held a few pieces of gold and silver plate, and behind it Louis posted Quentin Durward so that he was completely hidden.

As soon as the king had taken his place at the table, his visitors were admitted. Quentin, though himself unseen, could see everything that happened.

Louis welcomed his guests heartily. He showed no fear, but behaved as if the count and the cardinal were the two persons in whom he could most freely confide and whom he was most willing to honour.

Quentin began to think that Balue's humble bearing and Crèvecœur's frank manner had calmed the king's suspicions, but while the guests were placing themselves at the table, Louis darted one keen glance at them and then instantly looked towards Quentin's post. This was done in a moment, but the young Scot read in the king's glance doubt and hatred of his guests and a command for Quentin to be watchful and prompt.

Louis talked with Crèvecœur of old times, and no word of his betrayed that he feared attack. The count gave in frankly to the king's good humour, while the cardinal laughed at every jest.

After about an hour and a half the king took courteous leave of his guests, and as soon as he and Quentin were alone, he called to the young Archer. But his voice, which had been lively a moment before, was now faint: his face too was changed; his eye was no longer bright, the smile had left his face, and he seemed very tired.

'Your watch is not yet over,' he said to Quentin: 'refresh yourself for an instant at the table, and I will instruct you in your next duty.'

He threw himself back in his seat, covered his brow with his hand, and was silent.

CHAPTER X

IN THE GALLERY

The monarch of France waited patiently until the huge appetite of his young lifeguardsman was satisfied. He then led him back to the gallery. 'Attend,' he said: 'no man except Oliver or myself will enter here this evening, but ladies will come. You must pass for a Scotch recruit who cannot yet speak French: the ladies, thinking you cannot understand, will talk more freely. Listen to what they say: remember it until you have told it to me, and then forget it. Farewell.'

Louis disappeared behind the tapestry, leaving Quentin to reflect on what he had seen and heard. The Lady of the Lute was certainly one of those whom the king expected, and Quentin determined to listen carefully to every word that dropped from her lips, but to report to Louis no part of her discourse that might do her harm.

At last a door opened and a lady entered. Quentin recognized her as the princess Joan, and, drawing himself up, lowered his lance to her as she passed. The princess wore a gown of pale green silk, which gave a deathlike look to her unhealthy face. Quentin felt sorry for this

unhappy lady who seemed to bear her sufferings meekly and patiently.

Two ladies now entered from the other end of the gallery: one of them was the young girl who had waited on king Louis at the inn. Quentin felt certain she was the countess Isabelle, and wondered how he could ever have mistaken her for the serving maid of an inn. She was simply dressed in deep mourning, but her graceful beauty and dignified bearing seemed to Quentin proof of her noble birth.

The two ladies received Quentin's salute as if accustomed to such respect, and returned it with courtesy; but Quentin thought that the young lady coloured slightly. He wondered if she remembered him and was thinking of his boldness when she played upon her lute at the inn.

The young countess's companion was the countess Hameline: she was tall and graceful, though rather haughty in her manner. She was about thirty-five, and Quentin thought that her handsome face must have been beautiful in her youth.

Princess Joan stood waiting to receive the two ladies: she accepted and returned their compliments awkwardly, and the elder lady, ignorant of her royal rank, addressed her with condescension.

'I rejoice, madam,' she said, 'to meet at last so respectable a person as you appear to be. My niece and I have little for which to thank king Louis. Since we came here we have been treated little better than prisoners. After a thousand invitations to throw ourselves under his protection, the king of France has given us at first a low inn for our residence, and now a corner of this moth-eaten palace, out of which we are only permitted to creep towards sunset.'

'I am sorry,' said the princess timidly, 'that we have been unable to receive you as you deserve. Your niece, I hope, is better satisfied?'

'Much better than I can express,' answered the young countess. 'I sought safety, and I have found secrecy besides.'

'Silence, my silly niece,' said the elder lady: 'let us speak our minds. Do not heed that handsome young soldier: I am told he cannot understand our language.

I say then that I have never regretted anything so much as this French journey. The king's conduct, like his person, is more like a miser's than a king's.'

'Stop!' said the princess sharply: 'remember you speak of my father.'

'Of your father!' repeated the lady in surprise.

'I am Joan of France,' said the princess with dignity. 'But fear not: you intended no offence, and I have taken none.'

The countess Hameline, horrified at her mistake, apologized humbly. At the princess's invitation the two ladies sat down beside her: they spoke together, but in such low tones that Quentin could not hear what they said.

The conversation was soon interrupted by the entry of a man wrapped in a riding-cloak. Quentin, remembering the king's orders, moved quickly towards him and asked him to retire at once.

'By whose command?' replied the stranger in a tone of contempt.

'By the king's,' said Quentin firmly: 'and I am placed here to enforce it.'

'Not against Louis of Orleans,' said the duke, dropping his cloak.

The young man hesitated and then said, 'Your highness is too great for me to withstand your pleasure. I trust you will bear witness that I have done my duty, so far as your will permitted.'

'You shall have no blame, young soldier,' said Orleans, and passing forward he greeted the princess. It was the king's wish that Orleans should marry his daughter Joan, and though the duke had no affection for her, he dared not refuse.

'I heard there was society in this gallery,' he said, 'and ventured to approach.'

The colour that mounted into Joan's pale cheeks showed her pleasure at the duke's arrival. She hastened to present him to the two ladies of Croye, and begged him to be seated. Orleans laid a cushion at the feet of the beautiful young countess, and so placed himself that without appearing to neglect the princess he could give most of his attention to her lovely neighbour. Presently he began

to praise the countess Isabelle's beauty, and soon became so vehement that he forgot the presence of the princess.

The countess Hameline was delighted by Orleans's praise of her niece, but it distressed the younger countess, who glanced imploringly at the princess. But Joan was too unhappy and too timid to interfere. At last the countess Isabelle begged the princess to convince the duke that the ladies of Burgundy were not pleased with absurd compliments.

Orleans prevented Joan's answer. 'You think, lady,' he said to the young countess, 'that my praises are too hasty to be sincere: but remember that we nobles of France are as headlong in love as we are in war.'

The princess was unable to endure any longer Orleans's neglect of her, and sank backwards on her chair. As she seemed about to faint, the countess Hameline called for assistance, and the duke, cursing his foolish tongue, ran to call Joan's attendants. When he returned with them, he did all he could to restore her. His voice, almost tender with pity, comforted the unhappy lady, and the swoon was just passing away when King Louis entered the room.

CHAPTER XI

THE KING'S SCHEMES

As Louis entered the gallery, he darted a keen glance at all around. 'You here, cousin?' he said to Orleans, and turning to Quentin added sternly, 'Is this how you obey my orders?'

'Forgive the young man, sir,' said the duke: 'he did not neglect his duty. I was informed that the princess was in this gallery, and——'

'You came to make love, I suppose,' interrupted the king, 'and therefore induced the sentinel to disobey his orders. Joan looks ill: help her to her room, and I will conduct these ladies to theirs.'

Orleans, not daring to reply, left the gallery with the princess. Louis meanwhile escorted the countess Isabelle and her aunt to their room, and when they had entered, shut the door and turned the key. He then came slowly

towards Quentin Durward. 'You have done great wrong,' he said, 'and deserve to die.'

'Your majesty,' said the young soldier, 'what could I do?'

'If the intruder did not retire at your bidding,' answered the king, 'you should have shot him. Go: find my barber, Oliver, and send him to me.'

Durward hastened downstairs and, meeting Oliver in the court below, told him he was wanted by the king.

When the wily barber entered the gallery, Louis addressed him in an unpleasant tone: 'So, Oliver, your fine schemes are melting like snow!'

'I have heard with distress that all is not well, sir,' answered Oliver.

'Not well!' exclaimed the king. 'All is ill, man! Burgundy is arming and about to ally with England. It is all your fault, Oliver: you advised me to receive the women and to employ Magraubin the gipsy to carry messages to their household.'

'Your majesty,' said Oliver, 'knows my reasons. The countess Isabelle's lands lie between the frontiers of Burgundy and Flanders, and her castle is very strong: if she were married to someone friendly to France, she could give much annoyance to Burgundy.'

'It *is* a tempting bait,' said the king. 'If we could have kept her presence here secret, we might have done great things for France. But how could you recommend that cursed gipsy as messenger?'

'Your majesty,' said Oliver, 'trusted him much further than I advised. He would have carried a letter faithfully to the countess's men telling them to hold the castle and promising speedy relief, but your highness, wishing to test his prophetic powers, told him secrets that were worth betraying to duke Charles.'

'I am ashamed,' said Louis. 'And yet, Oliver, they say these gipsies have great knowledge of the future.'

Oliver replied that Magraubin had been a bad prophet on his own account, or he would have foreseen that he would be hanged, and would never have returned to Plessis.

'Not only does Burgundy threaten me with war for sheltering these ladies,' said Louis, 'but their presence is likely to interfere with my plans in my own family. The

duke of Orleans has hardly seen this maiden, but I prophesy that the sight of her will make him resist marriage with Joan.'

'Your majesty can send the ladies back to Burgundy,' answered the barber, 'and so make your peace with the duke.'

'Oliver,' answered the king, 'I cannot give up my scheme of marrying the countess Isabelle to a friend of France: the chance is too good to lose.'

'Your majesty,' said Oliver after a moment's thought, 'might marry her to some trusty friend who would take all blame on himself and serve you secretly, while in public you might disown him.'

'And where am I to find such a friend?' said Louis. 'I dare not give her to one of my mutinous nobles. If I send her to England or Germany, she is likely to marry someone more ready to side with Burgundy than with France. And yet, Oliver, the plan is too hopeful to be given up without a struggle! The rebels in Flanders, the men of Liege especially, if they were backed by a warlike count of Croye, would keep Charles the Bold busy for more than a twelvemonth. To whom can I marry the countess? Ah, I have it: why not William de la Marck?'

'De la Marck!' cried Oliver. 'Why, sir, he is the most notorious robber and murderer on all the frontiers, and though he is of noble birth, he has the look of a butcher. The countess will never accept him.'

'She will have no choice,' said Louis. 'I will tell the two ladies that if they stay here any longer, there will be war between France and Burgundy, and that as I am unwilling to give them up to duke Charles, I wish them to depart secretly from my dominions.'

'They will demand to be taken to England,' said Oliver.

'I will say,' replied Louis, 'that if we let them pass to England, Charles will be so angry that he will certainly make war on France. No; the most we can do is to help them to depart in disguise. They must take refuge with the bishop of Liege: he will place the beautiful Isabelle for the time in a convent.'

'And if that convent protects her from William de la Marck, when he knows your majesty's real intentions, I am much mistaken.'

'Why, yes,' said the king. 'De la Marck, helped by my money, has a band of unscrupulous outlaws, and both the duke of Burgundy and the bishop of Liege have cause to fear him. At present he has no lands, but maintains himself in the woods, and he will seize this chance of a wealthy bride. The duke of Burgundy has outlawed him, and when the Wild Boar (for so they call De la Marck) possesses the countess's estates, and has on his side the discontented citizens of Liege, Charles will be too busy to think of wars with France. How do you like the scheme, Oliver ?'

'It is excellent,' said Oliver, 'but I pity the countess.'

'I must persuade the ladies to make a speedy flight,' said Louis. 'You must inform William de la Marck of their movements, and let him choose his own time and place to propose marriage to the countess. I know a fit person to travel with them, one who knows too little of the country to suspect my real purpose. I mean the young Scot, Quentin Durward. He shall be told that he is to escort the ladies of Croye to the bishop of Liege : no one except the guide shall know that de la Marck is likely to interfere. You must find a guide fit for our purpose.'

'Has your majesty thought,' said Oliver, 'that the young Scot is likely to stand to his arms as soon as the Wild Boar attacks, and may be killed ?'

'What does it matter if the messenger is slain after his task is done ?' Louis answered calmly. 'We must hasten the ladies' departure, and then persuade the count of Crèvecœur that we had no share in it. We will tell him that we wished to restore the ladies to Burgundy.'

'Perhaps the count and his master will not believe it.'

'Oliver, they *shall* believe it !' said the king vehemently. 'I will *make* Charles trust me, even if I have to visit him in his tent unarmed, with no better guard than yourself, friend Oliver.'

'I would rather charge a line of spearmen than accompany your highness on such a visit when Charles of Burgundy has so many reasons for feeling sure that you are his enemy.'

'You are a fool, Oliver,' said the king: 'if it were necessary, I would do what I have said.'

This was the first hint Louis gave of the extraordinary

plan to deceive his great rival, that he afterwards put into practice and that nearly proved his ruin.

He parted from Oliver and went to the countesses' room. As soon as they heard that they could not be protected against the duke of Burgundy, they were ready to leave Plessis, but Louis found it difficult to persuade them to choose Liege as their hiding-place. They asked to be allowed to go to England and remain there until duke Charles relented. But this proposal did not at all suit Louis's plans, and he at last persuaded them to follow his advice.

The bishop of Liege had the right of protecting fugitives against any of the princes of Europe; moreover his soldiers, if not numerous, seemed at least sufficient to defend him and all under his protection from any sudden violence. Louis promised that the ladies should reach the bishop's little court in safety: he said that he would spread a rumour that they had escaped from Plessis by night, fearing to be given up to the count of Crèvecœur, and had fled towards the coast. He also promised them a small but faithful escort and every assistance in their journey.

The ladies begged to be allowed to start that same night, and Louis readily agreed to their hasty departure.

Quentin Durward was soon summoned to the king's presence, and heard with delight that he was selected to escort the ladies of Croye to the court of the bishop of Liege. He was ordered to travel as quickly and secretly as possible. The two countesses were to pretend to be two English ladies of rank who had been on a pilgrimage to Plessis and were about to visit the holy city of Cologne: Quentin was to pass as their trusted servant.

The young Scotchman's heart leapt for joy at the idea of being so near to the Lady of the Lute and of being entrusted with her protection. He felt no doubt in his own mind that he would conduct her successfully through the dangers of her journey.

Louis led Quentin to a separate tower of the castle, in which Galeotti Marti resided. This man was a famous student of the stars, by which he claimed to foretell future events. He had long flourished at the court of the king of Hungary before he was persuaded by Louis to come to France.

Marti's rooms were more splendidly furnished than any Quentin had yet seen in the royal palace. The astrologer himself was a tall, stately man with noble features and a long dark beard: in his youth he had been a fine soldier. He rose, as the king entered, and bowed with dignity.

'Father,' said Louis, 'this is the young man of whom I spoke to you. I have brought him here that you may tell me whether he will prove a good servant.'

Marti fixed his keen dark eyes on Quentin and said, 'Hold out your hand that I may read your fortune in its lines.'

When he had inspected the young Scot's palm, he led the king aside, 'Sir,' he said, 'everything promises that this youth will be brave and fortunate.'

'And faithful?' asked Louis.

'And faithful also,' repeated Marti: 'but yet,—'

'But what?' the king interrupted. 'Why do you pause? Speak plainly.'

'Then plainly, sir,' replied Marti, 'this youth is scrupulous, so beware what work you entrust to him.'

'Alas,' said Louis, 'it is true that, for the good of their countries, princes must sometimes stoop to base actions. But any baseness in the task I shall entrust to this youth, shall remain unknown to him.'

'You will do wisely,' said the astrologer. 'You may find too that the young man is sometimes rash, but, on the whole, he will serve your purpose well.'

'Will this next midnight be a lucky hour at which to begin a perilous journey?' asked the king.

'Lucky to him who *sends forth* the expedition,' said the astrologer after a pause, 'but the journey may be perilous or even fatal to those who are sent. I foretell violence and imprisonment for them.'

The king pulled a paper from his pocket, and warning Marti that it related to a matter on which he wished to consult him, proceeded to read: 'A person engaged in a grave quarrel desires to try to arrange matters by a personal interview with his enemy. He wishes to know what day will be lucky for this, whether he is likely to succeed, or whether his enemy will take advantage of the meeting to do him harm.'

'It is an important question,' said Marti thoughtfully; 'I must have time to study the stars before I answer it.'



LOUIS, QUENTIN, AND GALEOTTI THE ASTROLOGER

'Do so, good father,' answered Louis, who hoped thus to obtain advice on his plan of visiting the duke of Burgundy. 'I am determined, if the stars favour my purpose, to risk even my own life to stop these wars.'

'May the saints assist your majesty's pious purpose and guard your person!' said Marti.

'Thanks, learned father,' Louis replied. He placed a small purse of gold on the table, and turning to Quentin, said, 'Follow me, my young Scot: you are chosen by destiny to accomplish a bold adventure. You must start on your journey the very instant the bell tolls twelve.'

When the king and Quentin Durward had left the room, Marti weighed the purse in his hand. 'The miserly rogue!' he said. 'After coaxing me from Hungary, where I was loaded with gifts, does he think I will stay in this old castle like a bird in a cage, and with such poor reward? No, I will find a remedy. Cardinal Balue is crafty and generous: I will tell him of the king's inquiry; he will know its meaning, and I will give the king whatever answer the cardinal wishes.'

CHAPTER XII

THE JOURNEY BEGINS

Quentin Durward hastily put on a strong suit of armour, and placed on his head a good steel cap. These with a handsome coat of leather gave him the appearance of a superior servant in a noble household. The costume had been brought to Quentin by the barber Oliver, who also gave him a small purse of gold with which to meet his expenses on the road. Oliver told Quentin that his uncle had been placed on guard, to prevent his making inquiries.

At a few minutes before midnight Quentin reached the tower in which the countesses of Croye were lodged. He found there the men who were to accompany him, with their horses. There were also two mules already loaded with baggage, three horses for the two countesses and a waiting-woman, and a stately war-horse for Quentin.

Not a word was spoken: the men sat still in their

saddles ; they were only three in number, but one of them whispered to Quentin that their guide was to join them outside the city of Tours.

At length a small door at the foot of the tower opened and three women came out, attended by a man wrapped in a cloak. They mounted their horses in silence, and followed their cloaked companion past the sentries to the castle-gate, where he paused and spoke to them low and earnestly.

'May Heaven bless you, sir!' replied a voice that thrilled Quentin, 'I desire nothing so much as to be placed in safety under the protection of the good bishop of Liege.'

The man muttered an answer and retired through the castle-gate. The moonlight and shadows prevented Quentin's seeing clearly, but he thought he recognized in the cloaked figure the king himself.

After riding for a quarter of an hour, the party found themselves not far from the city of Tours, and Quentin was gazing with delight upon the beautiful moonlit landscape when he heard the elder lady demanding to speak with the leader of the band. He spurred his horse to the lady Hameline's side and replied to her questions when she asked his name, his military rank, and whether he was of noble birth.

'Are you perfectly acquainted with the road?' the lady inquired.

'I cannot claim much knowledge of the road,' Quentin answered, 'but I have received full instructions. A guide will be provided at our first resting-place: meanwhile a horseman who has just joined us, will guide us for the first stage.'

'And why were you chosen for this duty, young gentleman?' the countess asked. 'You seem young and inexperienced for such a task: you are a stranger too in France and speak the language as a foreigner.'

'I am bound to obey the commands of the king, madam, but I may not discuss them,' answered the young soldier.

'Are you not,' said the younger lady timidly, 'the same whom I saw when I waited on the king at the inn?'

Quentin answered that he was. 'Then, aunt,' said the countess Isabelle, 'I think we are safe under this young gentleman's protection: at least he does not look like

a person to whom a plan of treacherous cruelty against two helpless women would be entrusted.'

'On my honour, madam,' said Durward, 'I could not be guilty of treachery or cruelty towards you, even if I were offered France and Scotland as a reward!'

'You speak well, young man,' said the lady Hameline 'but we are used to fair speeches from the king of France and his servants. He induced us to fly to France, and then hid us in that miserable inn.'

Quentin presently rode forward to join the guide, who was the provost's hangman, Michael. Michael said that they would reach a resting-place soon after daybreak, and that another guide would meet them there.

They had nearly reached their destination when the young Scot was startled by a cry from the two ladies, 'Look back! quick, defenders! we are pursued!'

Quentin hastily looked back and saw two armed men galloping towards him. 'It can be only some of the provost's men going their rounds in the forest,' he said to Michael. 'Look, and tell me who they are.'

'They are neither the king's Archers nor the provost's men,' Michael replied.

'Ladies,' cried Durward, 'ride forward with the guide while I oppose these men's advance.'

The countess Isabelle looked at Michael and then whispered to her aunt, who said to Quentin, 'We prefer to risk whatever may happen in your company, Archer, than to go on with that man, whose looks we do not like.'

'Let it be as you wish, ladies,' said the youth. 'Our pursuers are only two: they seem by their arms to be noblemen; but if they have any evil purpose, they shall learn how a Scotch gentleman can do his duty. Which of you there,' he continued to the guards, 'is willing to resist these strangers with me?'

Two of the men hung back, but the third swore that he would face the two horsemen with Quentin.

While he spoke the two noblemen came up with the rear of the party. They were fully dressed in fine armour of polished steel without any mark by which they could be recognized.

As they approached, one of them called out to Quentin,

'Stand aside! we have come to relieve you of a charge that is above your rank. You will do well to leave these ladies in our care.'

'Know, sirs,' replied Durward, 'that I am discharging the duty entrusted to me by the king of France.'

'Stand aside!' the stranger repeated. 'Will you, a wandering beggar, resist two noblemen?'

'I will oppose your insolent attack,' Quentin answered. 'Draw your sword, or, if you will use the lance, prepare for the charge.'

The knights turned their horses and rode back to the distance of about a hundred and fifty yards, while the ladies waved their handkerchiefs to encourage Quentin.

Calling to his comrade to bear himself like a man, Durward put his horse in motion, and the four horsemen rushed together at full speed. The encounter was fatal to Quentin's companion, for his adversary ran him through the eye and he fell dead from his horse.

Quentin, on the other hand, was only scratched on the cheek by his opponent's lance, while his own spear, striking his antagonist upon the breast, hurled him to the ground. The young Archer jumped off his horse to remove the helmet of his fallen antagonist, but the other nobleman dismounted still more quickly and bestriding his friend who lay senseless, exclaimed, 'Mount, good fellow, and be off with those two ladies! On my oath, they have caused mischief enough this morning!'

'By your leave, sir,' said Quentin, 'I will first learn who is to answer for the death of my comrade.'

'You shall never live to know that,' the nobleman replied. 'Go back in peace, good fellow. You have worsted us: the lives of you and of your whole band could not atone for the evil you have done. Well, if you will have it' (for Quentin now drew his sword and advanced on him), 'take it with a vengeance.'

So saying he dealt the Scot a mighty blow on the helmet that cut through to his hair. Durward, unhurt but dizzy, sank upon one knee, and was for an instant at the mercy of the nobleman. But pity for Quentin's youth or admiration of his courage restrained the nobleman, and Durward, springing up, attacked him fiercely.

'The devil take you for your obstinacy,' muttered the

stranger. 'Cannot you be quiet until you are knocked on the head ?'

The duel was still at its hottest when a large party of horsemen rode up, crying, 'Cease, in the king's name!' Both Quentin and his adversary stepped back, and the former saw with surprise that his captain, lord Crawford, was at the head of the party. The provost Tristan with two or three of his followers was also there.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GUIDE

The arrival of lord Crawford and his guard put an immediate end to the duel, and the nobleman, who was none other than Dunois, threw off his helmet, and gave the old soldier his sword, saying, 'Crawford, I surrender myself. But listen: for God's sake, save the duke of Orleans.'

'How? what? the duke of Orleans!' exclaimed the Scottish commander. 'How is this? it will ruin him with the king for ever.'

'Ask no questions,' said Dunois: 'it was all my fault. I only came to have a snatch at that maiden, and make myself a rich married man; and see what has come of it! Keep back your soldiers: let no man see him.' So saying he uncovered Orleans's face and threw water upon it.

Quentin Durward meanwhile stood dazed by this new adventure. He had thrown to the ground a great prince and had fought with the famous Dunois. These were deeds of which to be proud, but it was very doubtful whether the king would consider them good services.

The duke had now recovered his senses and was able to attend to what passed between Dunois and Crawford. The former was pleading eagerly that the name of Orleans need not be mentioned in the matter, since the duke had merely come as his companion. Lord Crawford sighed and shook his head, 'I would gladly do you a service, Dunois,' he said, 'but I cannot believe that you brought the noble prince into this danger to serve any purpose of your own.'

'Noble Crawford,' said Orleans, 'you are right. It was *my* rash intention to seize the countess and marry her. I dragged Dunois here against his will.'

'Why did your highness tell lord Crawford that my story was false?' Dunois cried reproachfully. 'What was it to you if I chose to be hanged?'

'I had to tell the truth, my dearest friend,' answered Orleans, 'for the sake not only of your safety but also of my honour.'

'As for your honour,' Dunois said bitterly, 'these soldiers have seen your highness unhorsed by a wild Scottish boy.'

'That is no disgrace,' said lord Crawford: 'I am glad the youth acted bravely. I see, Dunois, that you split his steel cap. Give him a bonnet,' he added to one of the Archers. He then turned again to Dunois, saying, 'I must now ask the duke of Orleans and you to take horse and accompany me.'

'May I not speak one word to those noble ladies?' asked Orleans.

'Not one,' answered lord Crawford: 'I will not permit such folly.' Then, addressing Quentin, he added, 'You, young man, have done your duty. Go on and complete your task.'

'Pardon me, my lord,' said Tristan, with his usual brutal manner, 'the youth must find another guide. I cannot do without Michael when there is likely to be business on hand for him.'

At these words Michael came forward. 'Young sir,' he said to Quentin, 'follow the path before you, and you will soon meet your new guide. I would on no account be absent from my chief to-day! I have hanged many noblemen, but——' and he looked at the duke as if to say, 'I have never yet hanged a prince of the blood!' 'Ho, ho!' he continued aloud, 'Michael, you will be famous in history!'

Lord Crawford turned his back in disgust, and requested Orleans and Dunois to ride one on each side of him. As they started, Quentin heard Dunois whisper, 'Are you taking us to Plessis?'

'No, my unhappy friend,' Crawford answered: 'to Loches.'

The name of the dreaded prison, Loches, struck the young Scotchman with dismay, and he rode on sadly with his companions. He was now at the head of his little troop, near the lady Hameline, who said, 'I think, sir, you regret the victory that you won so gallantly on our behalf.'

Quentin answered simply and sincerely, 'I can regret nothing that is done in your service: but if you had been safe, I would rather have fallen by Dunois's sword than have been the means of sending him and the unhappy duke of Orleans to those fearful dungeons.'

'Then it *was* the duke of Orleans,' said the elder lady, turning to her niece. 'You see, niece, what might have been, had the sly king permitted us to be seen at his court. You might have married the first prince of the royal blood or, at least, the brave Dunois. This young gentleman did his duty bravely, but I think it is a pity that he stood between us and those princely rescuers.'

The countess Isabelle seemed displeased, and replied, 'Madam, if I did not know you were joking, I should say that you were ungrateful to our brave defender. If those gentlemen had defeated our escort, they would still have been taken prisoner by the royal guard, and we along with them. I trust,' she continued more timidly, 'that our defender will accept my grateful thanks.'

As Quentin turned towards her to reply, she saw blood streaming down one side of his face, and exclaimed in distress, 'Heavens, he is wounded! he bleeds! dismount, sir, and let your wound be bound up!'

Durward replied that his hurt was slight, but he was compelled to dismount and to seat himself on a bank while the elder countess washed his wound, and the younger bound it with her handkerchief.

The countess Isabelle felt both pity for the patient and gratitude for his services, and his face seemed to her very handsome. She and Quentin Durward were far different in rank and fortune, but they resembled each other in youth and beauty, and tender affection was easily aroused in both. From this moment the young Scot thought of little else but the countess, and the maiden felt more affection for her young defender than for any of the high-born nobles who had urged her to marry them. Above all, when she thought of Campo-Basso, the base and ugly

favourite of duke Charles, she resolved that no tyranny should make her marry so hateful a suitor.

Quentin began to find favour in the eyes of the lady Hameline also, who admired his good looks and his courage. 'My niece,' she said, 'has given you a handkerchief to bind your wound. I will give you one as a reward for your bravery.'

So saying she gave him a richly worked handkerchief of blue and silver, and pointing to the cloth on her horse's back and the feathers in her riding-cap showed him that the colours were the same.

Quentin, following the custom of the day, tied the lady Hameline's handkerchief round his arm, but he would have preferred to display there the one with which the countess Isabelle had bound his wound.

Meanwhile they continued their journey, Quentin riding happily by the side of the ladies. They presently heard the blast of a horn and saw a horseman riding towards them.

The stranger was mounted on a small shaggy horse, and was of a very strange appearance. His headdress was a red turban; his coat was green, and gaudy with gold lace; he wore wide white trousers; and his swarthy legs were bare from his knees to the sandals on his feet. He wore a dagger and a short crooked sword in a crimson sash.

This strange horseman had a dark, sunburnt face with a thin beard and piercing dark eyes. His features would have been handsome had it not been for the black locks that hung round his face, and a savage, wild look that he had.

'Have you come here to seek us?' Quentin asked.

The stranger nodded.

'And for what purpose?'

'To guide you to the palace of the bishop of Liege.'

'This man is also a gipsy,' said the ladies to each other: 'will the king again trust these outlaws?'

'What sign can you give me that I may know whether to trust you?' Quentin asked the gipsy.

'The old saying,' answered the other: '"The page slew the boar, but the prince had the glory!"'

'A true sign,' said Quentin: 'lead on, good fellow.' Then turning to the ladies he said, 'I am convinced that this is the guide we expected, for he has brought me a password known, I think, only to the king and me.'

CHAPTER XIV

THE WANDERER

Quentin presently left the countesses' side and riding up to the guide began to question him. 'You are a gipsy, are you not ?' he asked.

'I am,' replied the guide.

'How do you earn your living ?'

'By whatever means chance throws in my way.'

'What is your name ?'

'Men call me Hayraddin.'

'Will you be faithful ? Remember that your life is in my hands.'

'Strike ! I am not afraid to die.'

'Will money make you a trustworthy guide ?'

'No, if I am not trustworthy without it.'

'Then what will bind you ?' asked the Scot.

'Kindness,' replied the gipsy. 'But I am bound to you already.'

'How ?' exclaimed Durward in great surprise.

'Remember the victim whose body you cut down from the tree at Plessis. He was my brother.'

Durward parted from the guide and fell back to the rest of his troop. He placed small trust in Hayraddin, and he had already found his two other attendants stupid and cowardly.

'It is all the better,' he said to himself : 'that lovely young lady shall owe all to me, whatever dangers we meet.'

He therefore kept a keen watch on the members of his party. Sometimes he was by the side of the countesses, who talked to him almost as to a friend, but he also often rode with Hayraddin, questioning him about the road.

They travelled in this way for more than a week through lonely districts, avoiding large towns. Sometimes they met wandering gangs of gipsies, sometimes stray soldiers or perhaps robbers : but they were not attacked. They also met parties of Louis's mounted police, who allowed them to proceed unhindered when Quentin repeated the password given him for that purpose by the king.

Their resting-places were chiefly monasteries, where

they were received as pilgrims without inquiry. The countesses of Croye usually retired to rest instantly upon arrival, while Quentin, as their steward, made what arrangements were necessary.

The guide, however, gave Quentin much trouble. As he was an infidel vagabond, the monks would often only admit him very reluctantly within the outer walls of the monastery. At the same time it was necessary for Quentin to keep the man, upon whose guidance he relied, in good humour. He had also to keep careful watch on Hayraddin's conduct in order to observe, if possible, everyone with whom he talked. This of course was impossible if the gipsy was lodged outside the convents at which they stopped, and Durward could not help thinking that Hayraddin was anxious for this to happen. He would not keep quiet in the quarters allotted to him, in the monasteries, but talked, sang, and played tricks in a way that was strongly disapproved of by the monks. More than once Quentin could hardly restrain him, although he threatened him with severe punishment: and he had difficulty in persuading the monks not to thrust the gipsy out of doors.

But upon the tenth day of their journey, after they had entered Flanders and were approaching the town of Namur, all Quentin's efforts to keep Hayraddin within his sight failed.

The party were lodging at a convent the head of which was a man of strict views. The ladies retired to their room as usual; the gipsy was sent to pass the night in an outhouse; and the prior invited Quentin to come with him to his cell. During the last two days, the young Scot had heard reports that made him fear that the rest of their journey might be dangerous, and that even when they were in the bishop's palace, his power might not be sufficient to protect them. He therefore asked his host what was the state of affairs in Liege.

The prior answered, 'The people of Liege are wealthy and have had many disputes with the duke of Burgundy, their feudal lord, when he wished to make them pay new taxes. They have repeatedly broken out into open mutiny, and the duke has sworn that if they rebel again he will punish the city of Liege severely.'

'And he is a prince, by all report, likely to keep his vow,' said Quentin, 'so the men of Liege will probably beware of giving him an occasion.'

'It is to be hoped so,' said the prior; 'the good bishop labours to preserve peace, but——' here the prior stopped with a deep sigh. He then looked cautiously round and lowered his voice. 'The people of Liege,' he said, 'are secretly encouraged to mutiny by men employed by the king of France. There is moreover in the land a nobleman famous for bold deeds, but a plague to the countries of Burgundy and Flanders; his name is William de la Marck.'

'Called the Wild Boar?' asked Quentin.

'And rightly so called, my son,' answered the prior. 'He has formed a band of more than a thousand men and defies the duke of Burgundy and the bishop of Liege. He maintains himself and his followers by theft and other crimes.'

'I am surprised,' said Quentin, 'that the powerful duke of Burgundy does not hunt down this boar.'

'Alas, my son,' said the prior, 'duke Charles is now at Peronne collecting an army to make war against France. But de la Marck is dangerous. I fear he will soon stir up the rebels of Liege to some desperate enterprise.'

'But, good father,' said Quentin, 'has not the bishop of Liege still power enough to subdue the rebels?'

'The bishop,' replied the prior, 'has a force of good soldiers and is protected by the mighty house of Burgundy. William de la Marck was bred in his household, and bound to him by many benefits: but he murdered one of the bishop's chief servants and was banished. From that time he has been the bishop's constant foe.'

'Then you consider the bishop to be in danger?' Quentin asked very anxiously.

'I do not think the danger is immediate,' said the good monk. 'He has brave soldiers and I heard yesterday that duke Charles has sent five hundred men to assist the bishop.'

At this point their conversation was interrupted by a monk, who, almost speechless with anger, accused the gipsy of having played a disgraceful trick upon the younger friars. He had added to their cups at the evening meal a powerful drug that had made several of them drunk.

The prior listened in horror, and then descending to the court of the convent, ordered the monks to beat Hayraddin out of the sacred building with brooms and cart-whips. Quentin Durward, unable to prevent the gipsy's being expelled, could only stand and watch.

Hayraddin ran hither and thither through the court amongst the clamour of voices and the noise of blows until the prior commanded the gate to be flung open, and the gipsy fled forth.

Durward was suspicious: it seemed likely to him that Hayraddin wished to communicate with someone, and, finding that this was impossible in the daytime owing to Quentin's careful watch, he had purposely got himself turned out of the convent. Quentin now resolved to follow his guide and observe as secretly as possible what he did. Accordingly when Hayraddin fled out at the gate of the convent, he followed in pursuit.

CHAPTER XV

SPYING ON A SPY

Quentin saw the dark figure of the gipsy far ahead in the moonlight, flying through the street of the little village and across the level meadow that lay beyond. He could soon have overtaken him, but he preferred to watch his movements and not to interrupt them.

Hayraddin ran steadily onwards without looking behind, until he reached a little stream, the banks of which were lined with trees: he then stood still and blew a low note on his horn, which was answered by a whistle at some distance.

His pursuer meanwhile descended into the stream and crept along, concealed by overhanging boughs: his steps were unheard amid the ripple of the water. In this manner Quentin drew near unperceived, until he distinctly heard voices. Catching hold of a bough of a magnificent willow that swept the water with its branches, he raised himself into the tree and sat hidden in its centre.

From this position he discovered that Hayraddin was talking with a tall, stout, soldierly-looking man. The

stranger was well armed and on his jacket of yellow leather was a silver boar's head, the crest of his captain. Quentin recognized him as one of the German soldiers of fortune whose services were hired by William de la Marck. These German soldiers were known to be grasping, fierce, and vicious.

'A thousand curses!' growled the German in bad French, 'why have you kept me waiting for three nights?'

'I could not see you sooner,' Hayraddin answered humbly: 'there is a young Scot who watches my least movements. If he found out the truth he would kill me on the spot and carry the countesses back into France.'

'We are three,' said the German; 'we will attack them to-morrow and carry off the women.'

'You will find that rash,' said Hayraddin: 'this Scotch youngster has fought with Dunois and come off with honour. It is best for you to wait in ambush at the place arranged. Hold to the ambush at the cross-roads or give up the adventure.'

'Give up our captain's rich bride! I will charge through hell first. Why, we shall all be princes and dukes, with money to spend and wine to drink. Bring them to the cross-roads. They will dismount to rest their horses while you inquire the way. Then we will attack them.'

'Let it be so,' said Hayraddin; 'but I will not have a hair of the young man's head touched: he took pity upon my unhappy brother.'

The place arranged for the ambush was scarcely five miles distant, on the right bank of the river Maes. The German suggested that some horsemen should be placed on the road that followed the left bank, in case the ladies went that way.

The gipsy considered a moment and then answered, 'No, if the garrison of Namur saw troops in that direction they might attack them. Besides, the ladies *shall* travel on the right bank of the river: this Scottish boy has never asked anyone's advice but mine about the route; I was sent to him by one whose word no man mistrusts till they come to know him a little. Farewell. I must wait for my Scotch captain at the monastery or he will suspect me.'

They parted, each swearing to be at the cross-roads at the appointed time.

When they were out of sight, Quentin Durward descended from his hiding-place, his heart beating fast at the danger ahead. As he walked back to the convent, he considered the best plan to adopt. Hayraddin's treachery merited death, but Quentin felt he could not kill a man who had expressed a wish to save his life. If he dismissed the gipsy and took another guide, Hayraddin would go to de la Marck and inform him of Quentin's movements. Quentin therefore determined still to use the gipsy as a guide, but to take every precaution for the safety of his precious charge.

He had also to settle what route he would follow. After deep thought he decided to avoid the ambush by taking the road to Liege on the left bank of the river, and to throw his party upon the protection of the bishop when they reached Liege.

CHAPTER XVI

PALMISTRY

On the morrow, soon after daybreak, the ladies of Croye left the convent with their escort. Hayraddin joined the party near the village.

The road led them alongside the brook where Quentin had overheard the gipsy's conversation on the evening before, and they presently passed the very willow-tree that had concealed the Scot.

'Where did you find shelter last night, rascal?' said Quentin abruptly to the gipsy.

'In a good haystack,' answered Hayraddin.

'I have told you,' said Quentin, 'to behave decently when you are in worthy men's company. You are a profane rogue; and if I thought you a faithless guide also, I would plunge my dagger into your heart.'

Quentin fell back to his place beside the ladies, but he was too anxious to make any attempt to amuse them with lively talk, and they could not help noticing his silence.

'Our young companion has lost his tongue,' said the lady Hameline.

'Are you well, sir?' asked the countess Isabelle, blushing.

'Gentle ladies,' answered Quentin, 'if I am slow to speak, it is because I must now put to the proof how far you will trust your safety to me.'

'You speak mysteriously! Do you know of some pressing danger?' said the lady Hameline.

'Your looks confess it!' exclaimed the young countess, clasping her hands. 'In Heaven's name, what will become of us?'

'Nothing ill, I hope,' answered Durward. 'Ladies, can you trust me?'

'How far must we trust you?' asked the countess Hameline.

'I, on my part,' said the lady Isabelle, 'trust you fully and without condition.'

'Gentle lady,' replied Durward, highly pleased, 'you do me justice. My object is to proceed to Liege by the left bank of the Maes. This differs from the king's orders and the instructions given to the guide, but in the monastery I heard of robbers on the right bank of the river. I think therefore it would be safer to change our route. Have I your permission to do so?'

'My full permission,' answered the younger lady.

'Niece,' said the lady Hameline, 'I too believe the youth means well: but think, we shall disobey the instructions that king Louis repeated so strongly.'

'And why should we regard his instructions?' answered her niece. 'I would not dishonour this young gentleman by weighing his word for an instant against the orders of that crafty, selfish tyrant.'

'May God bless you for those words, lady!' cried Quentin joyously, and spurring his horse he rejoined the gipsy, who entered into conversation as if there had been no unkindly word between them earlier in the morning.

'The dog,' thought the Scot, 'does not snarl now because he intends to settle with me once for all when he can snatch me by the throat.'—'Honest Hayraddin,' he said aloud, 'you gipsies claim to tell men's fortunes from their hands. Give me a proof now.' And ungloving his hand he held it out to the gipsy.

Hayraddin looked carefully at all the lines on Quentin's

palm. 'I foresee,' he said, 'a large fortune by marriage, which will raise you among the wealthy and noble. I foresee that you will soon be threatened with great danger, from which you will only be saved by a faithful friend.'

'Yourself, I suppose!' said Quentin indignantly.

'My art tells me nothing that concerns myself,' replied the gipsy.

'Then,' said Quentin, 'I will tell you what I can foresee. Hayraddin, the danger that threatens me lies on the right bank of the river; I will avoid it by travelling to Liege along the left bank.'

'If you do as you intend,' replied the gipsy, 'king Louis will hang me because it pleased you to change the route that he recommended.'

'If we attain safely the purpose of the journey,' said Quentin, 'the king will excuse a change of route.'

'Yes,' Hayraddin answered, 'if you are sure that the king had in his own eye the same end to the journey that he declared to you. He is always least willing to reveal the purpose about which he is most anxious.'

'I pay no heed to your foul suspicions,' said Quentin indignantly. 'My duty is plain—to convey these ladies safely to Liege; and I think I can best discharge that duty by keeping on the left side of the Maes.'

'As you wish,' replied the gipsy: 'I am as ready to guide you down the left side as down the right. You must make your own excuse to your master.'

Quentin was pleased at Hayraddin's willing consent, for he needed his assistance as a guide.

Following the left bank of the Maes, the little party travelled so speedily and so easily that early on the next day they reached the end of their journey. They found that the bishop had taken up his residence in his beautiful castle of Schonwaldt about a mile outside Liege, for his health's sake, as he himself said, but rather perhaps to avoid being surprised by the mutinous population of the city. Quentin noticed that the castle was strongly guarded as if the bishop suspected danger.

The ladies of Croye were conducted into the great hall of the castle, where they were received most cordially by the bishop at the head of his little court.

Louis of Bourbon, bishop of Liege, was a kind and

generous prince, who was loved by the neighbouring rulers; but he governed his wealthy and mutinous subjects with an easy indifference that encouraged rather than subdued their rebellious purposes. He was a fast ally of the duke of Burgundy, and allowed him to share the rule of the bishopric. The duke, in return, was always ready to take the bishop's part with furious zeal.

The bishop promised to protect the two countesses to the extent of his power, and to exert his influence at the court of Burgundy on their behalf. 'At all events, my dearest daughters,' he said, 'be sure that I will care for your safety as for my own. I cannot send you to a convent, as you wish, for, alas, the inhabitants of Liege are so mutinous that my authority would not protect you beyond the bounds of my castle. But here you are most welcome!'

The bishop then escorted the ladies to his sister's apartment, and the master of the household entertained Quentin with liberal hospitality.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CITY

QUENTIN, separated from the lady Isabelle after so many days' companionship, felt chill at heart. He dispatched a servant with letters to Louis announcing the arrival of the countesses at Liege, and then sat down dejected in the recess of a window, in the great hall of Schonwaldt. There he pondered on the hard fortune that had not given him rank or wealth sufficient for him to push his daring suit.

His thoughts were interrupted by a touch on the shoulder, and looking up he saw the gipsy standing beside him.

Quentin loathed Hayraddin for his recent treachery, and he said sternly, 'What do you want? Speak and begone. Be off to the Boar of Ardennes or to the devil! only keep out of my sight in future!'

'The Boar of Ardennes!' repeated the gipsy with surprise. 'Then it was not a vague guess that made you change the road. But wait—yes—fool that I was! I have it! The willow by the brook near the convent,—I saw you look towards it as you passed—it must have

hidden one who could hear! You have foiled me, Quentin Durward, but you have also marred your own fortune. The fortune I foretold to you would have been fulfilled but for your obstinacy. But I am still your debtor for your attempt to save my brother's life, and I still mean to surprise you with my gratitude. And now farewell for a short time; I go to take leave of the ladies of Croye.'

'You!' said Quentin in amazement; '*you* will not be admitted to their presence.'

'Marthon, their waiting-woman, will conduct me to them,' said the gipsy with a sneer.

He turned away, but coming back said in a serious tone, 'I know your hopes: they are daring, yet not vain if I aid them. Every woman may be won, and "count" is but a nickname, which will befit Quentin as well as the nickname "king" befits Louis.'

Hayraddin instantly left the hall without waiting for a reply. Quentin hastily followed him through passages and down a small back stair to a door opening into a garden, and saw the gipsy hurry along one of the paths.

The garden was surrounded on two sides by the buildings of the castle, on the other two sides by a high battlemented wall. Hayraddin crossed to a small door that opened into the castle behind a large buttress overgrown with ivy. He looked back and waved his hand in triumph to Quentin, who saw that the door was opened by Marthon and concluded that the vile gipsy was indeed admitted into the countesses' presence.

He blamed himself severely for not having told the ladies of Hayraddin's infamous plot against their safety. The gipsy's promise to back his suit added to his anger, and he felt that it would be disgraceful to attain the hand of the countess Isabelle by such means. 'But it is all a trick,' he said to himself: 'he has procured access to the ladies upon some false pretence, and means mischief. I will watch for Marthon, and beg an interview with the countesses, so that I may put them on their guard. They shall find that I still watch carefully over Isabelle's safety.'

He left the garden, and when he reached the drawbridge, set out towards the city of Liege, then one of the richest in the world. In a few minutes he was within its walls.

The busy streets of Liege soon engrossed Quentin's

attention, and drove the countess Isabelle and the gipsy from his thoughts. He was fascinated by the bustling crowds and impressed by the evident wealth and splendour of the city.

The young Scot presently observed that several well-to-do-looking citizens were watching him attentively. They assembled in groups, whispered to one another, and gazed at the young Scotchman with interest, mingled with respect. At length he formed the centre of a considerable crowd, which moved along with him.

Quentin looked around and fixing upon a jolly, stout, respectable man, whose velvet coat and gold chain showed him to be a magistrate, he asked him whether there was anything unusual in his appearance to attract public attention.

'Surely not, good sir,' answered the townsman, 'there is nothing in your dress or appearance except that which we are delighted to see and desire to honour.'

'This sounds very polite, worthy sir,' said Quentin; 'but I confess I cannot even guess your meaning.'

'You need not pretend ignorance to me,' answered the merchant. 'I am Pavillon, the magistrate, and here is my colleague Rouslaer.'

Rouslaer, a large and dignified person, advanced and said in a tone of rebuke, 'You forget, good colleague, the place is too open: this gentleman will retire to your house or mine, and then we shall hear more of our good friend and ally.'

'I have no news for any of you,' said Quentin impatiently. 'I only ask you to disperse this idle crowd.'

'Then, sir,' said Rouslaer, 'since you are so secret, let me ask you plainly why do you wear a bonnet with a lily, the badge of king Louis's Scottish Archers, if you wish to remain unknown in Liege?'

'And what if I am an Archer of the Scottish Guard?' asked Quentin.

'He has confessed it!' cried Rouslaer and Pavillon joyfully to the assembled citizens. 'He has confessed himself an Archer of king Louis, the guardian of the liberties of Liege!'

A general shout arose from the multitude, 'Long live Louis of France! Our liberties or death! No taxes! Long live the Wild Boar! Down with Charles of Burgundy! Down with the bishop!'

Quentin was half stunned by the uproar, but he guessed its meaning and formed a plan of action.

He had previously forgotten that when his helmet had been split by Dunois's sword, it was replaced by one of the well-known steel bonnets of the Scottish Archers. The citizens of Liege, whose discontent had been encouraged by king Louis's agents, naturally regarded the presence of a Scottish Archer in their city as a sign that Louis had determined to assist them openly, and even hoped that his forces were actually entering the town.

Quentin, seeing that it was impossible to persuade the townsmen that they were mistaken, allowed them to conduct him towards the town-hall. As they moved along, he considered how he could get free. He was surrounded on every side, and Pavillon and Rouslaer each held one of his arms. Escape seemed impossible.

In this difficult situation Quentin appealed to the two magistrates. He hastily told them that he had thoughtlessly borrowed an Archer's bonnet to replace his own helmet. 'I regret,' he said, 'that the people of Liege have thus discovered the purpose of my visit. The king directed me to keep certain matters for your private ears, but if I am now taken to the town-hall, I may be forced to announce these secrets to the citizens.'

Rouslaer and Pavillon, who were the leaders of the rebellious citizens and wished to keep the chief power in their own hands, agreed that Quentin should leave the town for the present, and return by night to converse with them privately.

They had by this time reached Pavillon's house. The owner ushered Quentin in, while the crowd waited outside. Quentin speedily exchanged his bonnet for an apprentice's cap, and flung a cloak over his other apparel, and while Pavillon hastened back to the crowd with excuses for the disappearance of king Louis's envoy, the merchant's fair and smiling daughter, Trudchen, escorted Quentin through the garden to the river Maes, where a boat was waiting.

The young Archer landed within half a mile of the castle, and as he made his way to the principal gate, he saw Hayraddin come out of a small door in the castle-wall, row across the moat, and set out towards Liege. Quentin wondered angrily whether the vagabond had been all this while with the ladies of Croye.

When Quentin entered the castle, he found that dinner was being served in the great hall and that a place had been kept for him. During the meal he described the tumult aroused in the city by the discovery that he belonged to Louis's Guard. When he had finished his tale, there was a solemn pause, until the master of the household said sadly, 'I wish to God we saw those five hundred men from Burgundy!'

'Why do you think so gravely of it?' asked Quentin. 'You have many soldiers here, and your opponents are only the rabble of a disorderly city.'

'The men of Liege,' said the bishop's chaplain, 'are the fiercest in Europe. Duke Charles has twice chastised them for revolts against their bishop, and yet the sight of an Archer's bonnet is sufficient to stir them again to uproar. I fear there will be bloodshed. Schonwaldt is a place from which whoever can should depart as speedily as possible. I think the countesses of Croye are of the same opinion, for they have sent a messenger to the court of France with letters, which doubtless announce that they are going in search of another refuge.'

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NOTE

When the meal was ended, the chaplain invited Quentin to walk with him in the garden. Nothing could have been more agreeable to the young soldier, who hoped he might obtain sight of the lady Isabelle. When they reached the garden, his eyes ranged round the windows, balconies, and turrets, and he scarcely listened to the chaplain's talk. His companion presently left him to attend to some duty, but assured him that if he wished, he might walk in the garden till supper without being disturbed.

Quentin, as soon as he was alone, carefully inspected every window, especially those near the small door by which he had seen Hayraddin enter. But nothing stirred or showed itself.

Dusk was falling and Quentin was taking a last turn under the windows that had such attraction for him. Suddenly he heard above him a slight cough: he looked

up and saw a window open and a female hand drop a note, which fell into a bush at the foot of the wall. In an instant he snatched up the note and hastened to a grotto of rock in order to read the message in secret.

The contents of the note were as follows : ' What your eyes have too boldly said, mine have perhaps too rashly understood. But unjust persecution makes its victims bold, and it is better to throw myself on the gratitude of one than to remain the object of pursuit to many. If you dare do anything for one that risks much, pass into this garden to-morrow morning with a blue and white feather in your cap. Farewell.' A ring, engraved with the arms of the house of Croye, was enclosed in the letter.

Quentin was filled with pride and joy. He determined to do or die, and treated with scorn the thousand obstacles that lay between him and the goal of his wishes.

He slept little that night, and before sunrise he was in the castle garden, wearing a blue and white feather. After he had waited nearly two hours, he heard the notes of a lute and Isabelle appeared at a window above the door by which Marthon had admitted Hayraddin. She greeted Quentin kindly but shyly, coloured deeply, and shutting the window disappeared.

Quentin was now convinced that the note was genuine, and since no immediate danger seemed to threaten the countess, he decided that it was sufficient to keep himself ready to execute her commands whenever he should receive them. But fate purposed to call him into action sooner than he expected.

On the fourth night after his arrival at Schonwaldt, Quentin arranged to send letters on the morrow to lord Crawford renouncing the service of France, his excuse being the king's treacherous instructions to Hayraddin. When he had settled this, he went to bed and dreamt happily that he was walking beside the countess Isabelle and telling her his love.

He awoke suddenly with the noise of a great tumult sounding in his ears. Springing up he looked out of the window, but all was quiet in the garden. The shouts, however, that came through the open window, convinced Quentin that the castle was besieged by a large force.

He began to dress hastily, and while he was so engaged

there was a knock at the door and Hayraddin entered the room.

'Your fortune,' he cried vehemently to Durward without further greeting, 'turns upon the decision you make this minute.'

'Villain!' Quentin answered, 'there is treachery around us, and you, I doubt not, have a share in it!'

'You are mad,' replied the gipsy: 'why should I betray you? Listen! the men of Liege are in revolt: de la Marck with his band leads them. It is hopeless to resist! If you wish to save the countess, follow me in the name of her who sent you the ring!'

'Lead the way,' cried Quentin. 'In that name I dare every danger!'

'Follow me,' said Hayraddin. 'My debt to you will be paid, and you shall have a countess for your wife!'

'I follow,' answered Quentin, drawing his sword.

The gipsy ran down the stairs and led Quentin to the garden, where the noise from the opposite side of the castle sounded ten times as loud. They crossed to the door leading to the ladies' apartments, and, at a signal from Hayraddin, two women appeared, muffled in black silk veils. Quentin offered his arm to one of them, who clung to it with trembling eagerness: the gipsy, who conducted the other, made straight for the moat through a gate in the garden wall.

As they rowed across the moat, the shouting behind them redoubled, as if the castle was being taken. Quentin longed to turn back to the help of the bishop, but his duty was to stay with the lady Isabelle.

'On, on,' cried Hayraddin, 'with all the haste you can! Horses are waiting for us in that thicket.'

'There are only two horses,' said Quentin, who saw them in the moonlight.

'They are enough,' replied the gipsy. 'You two must ride for Tongres: Marthon will stay with my tribe.'

'Marthon!' exclaimed the countess: 'is not this my niece?'

'Only Marthon,' said Hayraddin. 'I dared not carry off *both* the ladies of Croye from the Wild Boar of Ardennes.'

'Wretch!' cried Quentin: 'but it is not too late. I will go back to rescue the lady Hameline.'

'I am Hameline,' whispered the lady in a disturbed voice, 'and I thank you for my rescue.'

'What!' cried Quentin, 'is the lady Isabelle left behind? Then, farewell!'

He turned towards the castle but Hayraddin seized him. 'Listen to me: you are running to your death! Why, in the devil's name, did you wear the lady Hameline's blue and white handkerchief, if you did not love her?'

Quentin made no reply, but, wrenching himself from the gipsy's grasp, sped back to the castle.

Hayraddin turned to the countess Hameline, who had sunk to the ground overcome by shame, fear, and disappointment. 'There has been a mistake,' he said. 'Up, lady, and come with me! I will provide you a gallanter husband than this boy.'

The lady Hameline was a vain, weak woman, but passion had made her violent. 'Monster,' she cried, 'you said the stars had decreed my marriage with that youth, and you caused me to write. Wretch that I was!'

'Your foolish handkerchief led me into error,' said Hayraddin. 'Up and follow me! Take notice I endure neither weeping nor swooning.'

'I will not stir a foot,' replied the countess obstinately.

'By Heaven, you shall!' exclaimed Hayraddin. As he spoke, a clamour in which shouts of victory were mingled with screams of terror and despair reached them from the castle. 'Hear that, lady,' said the gipsy, 'and be thankful you are here! Believe me, I will care for you honestly and find you a good husband.'

The countess, exhausted by terror, allowed Hayraddin and Marthon to lead her wherever they wished.

'I always thought your plan was folly,' whispered Marthon to Hayraddin. 'If you had brought the *young* people together, we should have had a hold on their gratitude and a footing in their castle.'

'I could never have persuaded the countess Isabelle to write so frank a note,' answered Hayraddin. 'Besides I love the lad, and to marry him to Isabelle would bring on him de la Marck, Burgundy, France—everyone that has an interest in her marriage. Well, my plan has failed, and we must now bring Hameline to the Wild Boar.'

CHAPTER XIX

THE SACK

The surprised and terrified garrison of the castle had for some time defended the place against the Liegeois, but the immense crowds of assailants had got possession of the courts and lower parts of the castle, and were busy pursuing the conquered and searching for spoil, when Quentin Durward tried to force his way into the scene of tumult and horror.

As he approached the garden wall, he saw men being thrown into the moat, but his courage did not falter for an instant. He could find no boat, so throwing himself into the moat, he swam to the drawbridge and catching hold of a hanging chain drew himself out of the water. As he struggled onto the bridge, one of de la Marck's German soldiers, with his bloody sword in his hand, prepared to attack him.

'What, fellow!' cried Quentin in a tone of authority. 'Is this the way you assist a comrade? Give me your hand.'

The soldier hesitated, and then silently helped him upon the bridge. Quentin gave him no time to think, but cried, 'To the western tower, if you wish for wealth! The bishop's treasury is there.'

These words were echoed on every hand, and all the stragglers within hearing rushed wildly to the tower, which lay in the opposite direction to that which Quentin was determined to pursue.

Bearing himself as if he was one of the victors, he forced his way towards the garden. He met with small opposition, for many had hastened to the treasury and others were summoned to capture the bishop, who was attempting to escape from the castle.

Once three men rushed at him, crying, 'Liege, Liege!' Quentin prepared to defend himself and replied, 'France, friend to Liege!' 'Long live France!' cried the Liegeois, and passed on. Again four or five of de la Marck's followers set upon him with cries of 'The Wild Boar!' but Quentin satisfied them as he had the Liegeois.

On reaching the countesses' turret he shuddered to find the door blocked with dead bodies. He had dragged two

aside, and was stepping over a third, when the supposed corpse laid hold of his cloak, and entreated him to assist him, exclaiming, 'I am the magistrate Pavillon of Liege! Do not leave me to die!'

Quentin, hoping that Pavillon might be able to protect their retreat, raised him to his feet. 'On whose side are you?' gasped the magistrate.

'France's,' answered Quentin.

'Why, it is the young Archer!' cried Pavillon. 'I have found a friend in this fearful night. Go where you will, I follow.'

They climbed the stairs together. At the top was an ante-room: here boxes had been rifled and a dying lamp shed a feeble beam on a dead man, who lay across the hearth.

Bounding from Pavillon, Quentin sprang through a second and third room, both of which were empty. At length a faint glimmer of light revealed a hidden door in the corner of the room. The Archer rushed at it with his whole force, and broke through headlong into a small chamber where a female figure, which had been kneeling in prayer, sank terrified on the floor. Quentin saw with joy that it was the countess Isabelle, and hastily raising her from the ground, he cried that she was now under safe protection.

'Durward,' she said at last, 'is it indeed you? Then there is some hope left. I thought all living friends had left me to my fate. Do not again abandon me!'

'Never, never,' answered Quentin fervently. 'Master Pavillon,' he added to the magistrate, 'you must help to protect this lady. She was put under my special care by your ally, the king of France. Aid me to shelter her from violence, or your city will lose king Louis's favour. Above all, she must be protected from William de la Marck.'

Pavillon promised that he would do his best. The tumult in the castle had been dying down, and Peterkin, Pavillon's lieutenant, came to inform his master that he was wanted at a military council. 'This Boar seems likely to make Schonwaldt his own den,' he added, 'and to turn out a worse neighbour than the old bishop ever was. It is a shame to see how they have maltreated the old man.'

'Peter,' said Pavillon, 'we will go at once to the city. I will stay no longer in Schonwaldt.'

'But the bridges of the castle are up, master, and the gates are guarded by de la Marck's men.'

'But what business has he to make honest men prisoners ?' said the alarmed townsman.

'I cannot tell,' said Peter. 'There is some talk about the ladies of Croye, who have escaped during the storming of the castle. That first put the Wild Boar beside himself with anger, and now he is beside himself with drink also.'

Pavillon seemed at a loss, and Quentin saw that this was his opportunity if he wished to escape from the castle with the countess Isabelle. 'Do not hesitate, sir,' he said : 'go boldly to de la Marck and demand free leave to quit the castle for yourself, your lieutenant, your attendant, and your daughter.'

'But who is my attendant ?'

'I am for the present,' replied the Scot.

'But are you not the king of France's envoy ?'

'Yes, but my message is to the magistrates of Liege, and I will deliver it in Liege only. You must get me secretly out of the castle as your attendant.'

'Good ; but you spoke of my daughter !'

'This lady,' said Durward, 'will call you father while we are in this place.'

'Pray, protect me as you would your own daughter !' cried the countess, throwing herself at Pavillon's feet.

The good merchant was much moved. 'She *shall* be my daughter,' he said, 'well wrapped up in her silk black veil.'

'Admirably spoken !' cried Quentin. 'Noble sir, go forward.'

As they crossed the courts to the great hall of the castle, where the Wild Boar was holding a feast, and passed among the dead and dying, Isabelle said in a low voice to Quentin, 'If I escape this fearful night, I shall never forget your bravery. But I implore one thing : rather than leave me captive in the hands of these monsters, plunge your dagger in my heart.'

Quentin pressed her hand to reassure her, and leaning upon him she entered the dreadful hall, preceded by Pavillon and his lieutenant and followed by a dozen of the magistrate's men

CHAPTER XX

THE REVELLERS

A HORRIBLE change had taken place since Quentin had last entered the castle-hall. Where all had been orderly and decent, there was now a scene of wild debauchery.

At the head of the table, on the bishop's throne, sat the Wild Boar clothed in massive armour. A coat made of the skin of a huge wild boar with hoofs and tusks of silver hung over his shoulders: the skin of the head was drawn over the baron's forehead, giving him the appearance of a grinning, ghastly monster.

De la Marck had a natural resemblance to the bestial creature after which he was named, and his habits of violence and intemperance had set their stamp upon his features. The muscles of his broad ruddy cheeks were swollen, and his large eyes were dimmed and reddened. The horror of his face and its brutal expression were increased by his broad, uncombed beard.

The Wild Boar's soldiers sat round the table, mixed with the men of Liege, some of whom were of the very lowest class. Among them was a butcher, named Blok, his bare arms smeared with blood and his hatchet lying on the table before him. The soldiers were nearly all drunk, and presented a disgusting spectacle, as they shouted vile words and sang coarse songs. The more respectable of the townsmen showed by their pale and anxious faces that they disliked the feast and feared their companions.

The magistrate Pavillon was alarmed by the wild scene, but he managed to make a short speech, complimenting the company upon their great victory.

'Ay,' answered de la Marck, 'we have brought down the game at last!—But ho, sir! who is this fair one by your side? Unveil, unveil!'

'It is my daughter,' answered Pavillon; 'and I pray your forgiveness for her wearing a veil.'

'We will let her be for the present,' said the baron. 'Come hither, noble magistrate, and sit beside me. Soldiers, bring in the bishop.'

Pavillon excused himself and took a seat near the

bottom of the table, his followers keeping close behind him. Near by sat a handsome lad, a nephew of the Wild Boar and a great favourite of his. Quentin, who was aware of this, planted himself as close as he could to the youth, determined to make him a hostage, if other means of safety failed.

There was a bustle in the hall, and the bishop of Liege was dragged forward by the brutal soldiers. The scene that followed was short and fearful. At first de la Marck seemed impressed by the noble dignity of his victim, but when he had emptied a large glass of wine, he resumed his insolent manner. 'Blok,' he said to the butcher, 'be ready!'

Blok rose, seized his hatchet, and stood with it uplifted.

'Look at that man, Louis of Bourbon,' said de la Marck fiercely: 'what terms will you now offer for your freedom?'

The bishop cast a melancholy look at the butcher, and then said firmly, 'Hear me, William de la Marck: you have stirred up sedition in Liege, you have ill-treated me, taken my palace, slain my people, plundered my goods. For this alone you deserve to be declared an outlaw. But you have done more than all this: you have defiled the house of God with murder and theft——'

'Have you done?' cried the Wild Boar, stamping his foot.

'I have not yet told you the terms I offer,' answered the bishop.

'Go on!' roared de la Marck, grinding his teeth till the foam flew from his lips.

'These are the terms,' resumed the bishop calmly: 'renounce your commands, distribute your goods to orphans and widows, put on sackcloth, and go barefoot on a pilgrimage to Rome.'

The tyrant slowly raised himself in his chair with amazement and rage, and as the bishop ceased, made a sign to Blok. The ruffian struck, and the murdered bishop sank without a groan at the foot of his own throne.

The men of Liege at once started up, cursing the Wild Boar and shouting for vengeance, but de la Marck cried in a tremendous voice, 'How now, pigs of Liege? dc you dare match yourselves with the Wild Boar? Up,' he shouted to his soldiers, 'let these Flemish hogs see your tusks!'



DEATH OF THE BISHOP OF LIEGE

His followers sprang up at the command, and each in an instant held his dagger to his neighbour's throat. But the courage of Quentin Durward gave a new turn to the scene. Springing on de la Marck's nephew, he drew his dagger, exclaiming, 'Is that your game? Then here I play my part!'

'Hold, hold!' cried de la Marck in alarm, 'it is only a jest. Do you think I would injure my good friends of Liege? Soldiers, unloose your hold, take away this corpse,' giving the bishop's body a thrust with his foot; 'and let us drown unkindness in wine.'

While the citizens and soldiers still glared at one another, Quentin Durward exclaimed, 'Hear me, William de la Marck and you, citizens of Liege! I am a servant of king Louis of France: I am here to behold and report your actions, and I see with wonder that they are those of madmen. The hosts of Burgundy will be instantly in motion against you: and if you want help from France, you must behave differently. I advise all men of Liege to return instantly to the city.'

'France and Liege!' cried Pavillon's men and several other citizens. 'Long live the gallant Archer!'

De la Marck's eyes sparkled and he gripped his dagger, but there was something in the looks of his soldiers that even he had to respect. They all knew the secret support William had received from Louis: Charles of Burgundy was likely to resent the murder of the bishop, and it would be dangerous to quarrel with Liege and provoke the king of France at the same time. The Wild Boar, seeing that he would not be supported in further violence, declared that his good friends of Liege could all leave Schonwaldt at their pleasure, and promised that next day he would arrange for their mutual defence.

Pavillon was among the first to depart. 'Keep close about me, my lads,' he said to his bodyguard, 'and we will get out of this den of thieves as fast as we can.'

Most of the respectable citizens followed his example, and all left the castle without any opposition.

Quentin ventured to ask the young countess how she felt.

'I am well,' she answered: 'but do not stop to ask a ques ion. Let us not lose an instant! Let us fly!'

She tried to quicken her pace as she spoke, but she was so exhausted that she would have fallen, if Quentin had not raised her and carried her in his arms.

They reached the banks of the river in breathless haste, and procured a boat. When they arrived at Pavillon's garden, the magistrate called his daughter Trudchen and bade her attend to the beautiful and half-fainting stranger. He then ushered Quentin to a pleasant room, in which he was to spend the night.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FLIGHT

THE young Scot slept deeply until late on the following day, when his host entered the apartment and informed him that the lady Isabelle was fit to travel and anxious to depart. 'She is waiting for you,' he said, 'eager to decide which way you will go. But you must take new disguises, for there is word in the town that the ladies of Croye are travelling through the country in pilgrims' dresses, attended by a Scottish Archer, and that one of them was brought into Schonwaldt last night by a gipsy after we had left. It was further said that this gipsy assured William de la Marck that you were charged with no message either to him or to the people of Liege, and that you had stolen away the young countess. De la Marck has been violent both with the bishop and with the Liegeois, but the general opinion is that he is a good-natured soul at bottom and the only leader in the world to command us against Burgundy.'

Quentin agreed that he and Isabelle must leave in disguise instantly. He then followed the honest citizen to his counting-house, where he was invited to take whatever sum he needed.

When Quentin and Pavillon reached the parlour, they found the countess dressed as a Flemish maiden of the middle class. 'Master Quentin,' she said, as the Archer humbly kissed her hand, 'we must take leave of these kind friends. You must change your dress and go with me, unless you are tired of befriending one so unfortunate.'

'I will guard you to the end of the earth!' Quentin cried. 'Wherever you wish to go, I will guard you!'

'A convent would be my choice,' said Isabelle, 'but I fear it would prove a weak defence against those who pursue me.'

'I do not recommend a convent in this neighbourhood,' Pavillon remarked: 'the Wild Boar pays little regard to cloisters.'

Quentin was disguised as a well-to-do Flemish workman, and he and Isabelle were then mounted on two stout horses. Peter guided them to the eastern gate of the city, where they passed the guards by means of a permit given them by Pavillon. Outside the gate they were joined by Hans Glover, Trudchen's betrothed, who was to guide them out of the territory of Liege. He saluted them respectfully and asked the countess on which road she wished to be conducted.

'Guide me,' she said, 'towards the nearest town on the frontiers of Brabant.'

'Then you have settled the end of your journey?' asked Quentin, bringing his horse near to Isabelle's.

'Yes, my friend,' replied the young lady: 'I am resolved to return to my native country, and to throw myself on the mercy of the duke of Burgundy. I cannot trust the kings of England and Germany.'

'Will you become the bride of the count of Campo-Basso?' Quentin ventured to ask anxiously.

'No, Durward, no,' she answered: 'Burgundy may seize my lands, he may imprison me, before I give my hand to Campo-Basso!'

'Why do you not make for your own strong castle?' asked Quentin: 'why do you not call around you your dependents, and make terms with Burgundy?'

'Alas,' said the countess, 'the crafty Louis suggested that scheme, intending to turn it to his own advantage, but it was betrayed to Burgundy by the gipsy Magraubin. My houses were then seized by the duke and garrisoned. No, I will submit to my sovereign. I trust the countess Hameline has already taken this wise step.'

'The countess Hameline!' repeated Quentin, who in the recent stirring events had forgotten the elder countess and now recollected that her actions were unknown to Isabelle.

'Yes,' said the latter: 'do you know anything of her?'

Quentin related that he had been summoned to attend the countess in a flight from Liege, which he expected the lady Isabelle to share: he told also of the discovery that had been made and of his own return to the castle.

'But for your return,' exclaimed Isabelle, 'I should have been before now the bride of de la Marck. But oh, my unhappy kinswoman! and the wretch Marthon! it was she that introduced to my aunt the villains Magraubin and Hayraddin. I do not doubt that we were surrounded from the beginning by king Louis's snares, in order to persuade us to take refuge at his court. But alas, my kinswoman! what do you think her fate will be?'

Durward answered that the countess's captors could gain nothing by harming her, but might profit by treating her well and putting her to ransom.

The travellers, engaged in such conversation, pursued their journey for several hours. The circumstances in which the two lovers were placed, seemed to set them on a level. If the countess was of higher rank than Quentin and had inherited a fortune incalculably larger, she was for the present as poor as he and her life depended solely upon his courage and devotion. They did not *speak* of love, but the thoughts of both were full of it.

It was two hours after noon when they were alarmed by the guide, who with a horrified face announced that they were pursued by a party of de la Marck's horsemen. Quentin looked back and seeing a cloud of dust advancing along the road with one or two of the headmost troopers riding furiously in front, addressed his companion: 'Dearest Isabelle, I have no weapon here except my sword: but since I cannot fight for you, I will fly with you. If we can reach the wood in front of us before they come up, we shall easily find means to escape.'

Accompanied by Hans Glover, they rode towards the shelter of the wood as fast as their tired horses could go. The troopers increased their pace, but the fugitives, being unarmed, rode faster than their pursuers, and were within about a quarter of a mile of the wood when a body of men-at-arms, under a knight's banner, advanced from the cover to meet them.

'They must be Burgundians,' said Isabelle: 'I know

the banner; it is the count of Crèvecœur's. I will surrender myself to him.'

They soon joined Crèvecœur's men, and the countess addressed the leader. 'Noble count,' she said, 'Isabelle of Croye asks protection from your valour.'

'You shall have it, fair kinswoman; but there is little time to talk. Do these fiends dare to advance against the banner of Crèvecœur? Damian, my lance! Advance! Prepare to charge! Crèvecœur to the rescue!'

Shouting his war-cry and followed by his men-at-arms, he galloped forward to charge the enemy.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SURRENDER

The skirmish between de la Marck's troopers and the Burgundians lasted scarcely five minutes before the former were routed.

Returning to the countess, Crèvecœur said, 'This is a rough welcome to your home, my pretty lady; it was well that I came up in time.'

'My lord,' said Isabelle, 'before we speak further, let me know if I am a prisoner and where you are to conduct me.'

'I intend to conduct you to the court of the duke at Peronne,' answered the count.

'Pray permit this good fellow, whose name is Hans Glover, to go back unharmed to Liege.'

'He may go: have you any further request to make?'

'Only,' said Isabelle, looking towards Quentin, 'that you will be pleased to be favourable to this young gentleman.'

'Umph!' said Crèvecœur, casting a scornful glance on the young Scot. 'And pray, lady, what has he done to deserve such treatment?'

'He has saved my life,' replied the countess, reddening with indignation.

'Your life! Umph!' Crèvecœur repeated. 'It is a pity, lady, that you incurred such a debt. But let it pass. He may attend me if his rank permits, and I will see he

suffers no injury: only, I myself will in future be your protector, and find for him some fitter duty.'

'My lord,' exclaimed Durward, unable to keep silence any longer, 'let me inform you that I am Quentin Durward, an Archer of the Scottish bodyguard.'

'I thank you for the information,' said the count mockingly: 'have the goodness, sir Archer, to ride with me to the front of the party.'

Quentin moved onward at Crèvecœur's command and said in a firm tone, 'My lord, may I request you to tell me if I am at liberty or your prisoner?'

'I can only answer your question by another,' replied the count. 'Are France and Burgundy at peace or war with each other?'

'You, my lord,' replied the Scot, 'should certainly know that better than I. I have been absent from the court of France, and have heard no news for some time.'

'I myself,' said the count, 'who have been at Peronne with the duke for the past week, cannot tell any more than you, and therefore I must for the present treat you as my prisoner. Only, if you have really been of service to my kinswoman and if you reply honestly to my questions, you will be the better off.'

'The countess of Croye,' said Quentin, 'is best judge if I have rendered any service. You will yourself judge of my answers.'

'Umph! haughty enough,' muttered the count. 'How long, sir, have you been about the person of the lady Isabelle of Croye?'

'I have acted as her escort since she left France for Flanders.'

'Ho, ho!' said the count: 'that is to say, since she fled from Plessis. You, an Archer of the Scottish Guard, accompanied her, of course, by the express orders of king Louis?'

Though Quentin thought he owed little to the king of France after his treachery, he did not feel free to betray the trust that Louis had seemed to repose in him: he therefore replied that he had received orders from his superior officer and had inquired no further.

'That may be,' said Crèvecœur, 'but it will be difficult for Louis to continue to declare that he did not know of

the ladies of Croye's escape from France, since they were escorted by one of his own lifeguards. And to what place were you retreating, sir Archer ?'

'To Liege, my lord,' answered the Scot, 'where the ladies desired to be placed under the protection of the late bishop.'

'The *late* bishop ! exclaimed Crèvecœur ; 'is he dead ?'

'He was murdered, my lord.'

'Murdered !' exclaimed the count again ; 'it is impossible !'

'I saw the deed done with my own eyes after the castle had been stormed by the bloodthirsty William de la Marck with the help of the insurgent Liegeois.'

'I am thunderstruck !' said Crèvecœur. 'Liege in insurrection ! Schonwaldt taken ! the bishop murdered ! Speak : this was Louis's doing, was it not ?'

'I know no more of these villainies than you. I would have withstood them, but what could I do ? They were hundreds and I only one. My only care was to rescue the countess Isabelle.'

'I believe you, young man,' said the count. 'But alas that the noble bishop should be murdered by a wretch, a monster ! If I know Charles of Burgundy, his vengeance will be sudden and severe. And those faithless beasts, the Liegeois, to take arms against their kind prince ! I hope to see their canals running blood by the light of their burning houses !'

When the count had questioned Durward on every particular of the surprise of Schonwaldt and the death of the bishop, he suddenly recollected the lady Hameline, and asked what had become of 'that blundering, old idiot.'

Durward explained that she had made her escape from Schonwaldt before the attack. He added that he had heard a report that she had fallen into the hands of William de la Marck.

'Then I trust he will marry her,' said Crèvecœur, 'as he is likely to do for her money-bags. And he is equally likely to knock her on the head, as soon as he has emptied them.'

The count then asked so many questions concerning Quentin's journey from Plessis and the way in which the ladies had treated him, that Quentin could not conceal his

embarrassment from the keen-sighted soldier, who said, 'Umph! I see it is as I guessed, on one side at least; I trust the other party has kept her senses better. Come, sir, spur on ahead, while I fall back to speak with the lady Isabelle. Yet stay! one word before you go. You have had, I imagine, a happy journey. Forget it all, young soldier; remember the honoured countess of Croye, and forget the wandering and adventurous maiden.'

'My lord,' replied Quentin indignantly, 'when I require your advice I will ask it. I have fought with the duke of Orleans and with Dunois, the one nobler than Crèvecœur, the other a better warrior.'

'Gentle youth,' said Crèvecœur, laughing, 'you may have fought with princes and played the champion for countesses, but you are by no means the equal in rank and fortune of those whose casual opponent or companion you have been.'

He reined back his horse and joined the countess, to whom his well-meant advice was still more disagreeable than to Quentin.

In the evening they reached the town of Charleroi, where the count left Isabelle, whom terror and fatigue had made incapable of travelling further, in the care of the abbess of the convent.

Determined to be the first to carry the news of the bishop's murder to duke Charles, Crèvecœur procured fresh horses and, informing Quentin Durward that he must accompany him, continued his journey to Peronne without stopping for rest.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE UNINVITED GUEST

QUENTIN, during the earlier part of the night-journey, had to combat the bitter heartache that a young man feels when he parts, probably for ever, from her he loves. His only comfort was the memory of Isabelle's sweet words and looks. After midnight he was overcome by fatigue and almost fell asleep as he rode.

The count halted four hours in the town of Landrecy for rest and refreshment, and Quentin, when he awoke, was a different being in strength and spirits. He once more felt confidence in himself and his fortunes. Crèvecœur

passed several jests on his sleepiness of the preceding night, but he replied so good-humouredly and respectfully that the count was favourably impressed, and at length promised that, if Durward would leave the Scottish bodyguard, he would have him enrolled in the household of the duke of Burgundy. But Quentin, with many thanks, declined this favour at present, until he should find out how far he had to complain of his original patron, king Louis.

The little party came at last within two miles of the famous town of Peronne, near which the duke of Burgundy's army lay encamped, ready, as was supposed, to invade France. Louis XI had assembled a strong force in opposition.

Peronne, situated upon a deep river, in a flat country, was considered one of the strongest fortresses in France. The count of Crèvecœur, his retinue, and his prisoner, were approaching this fortress when they were met in the pleasant glades of a large forest by two men whose high rank was shown by the number of their attendants. They were engaged in hawking, but on perceiving Crèvecœur they came galloping towards him.

'News, news, count of Crèvecœur!' they cried both together: 'will you tell news, or hear news?'

The elder of the two persons was the baron d'Hymbercourt, a handsome man with a dark, sad countenance; his companion, who was Philip des Comines, one of the most esteemed counsellors of Charles the Bold, had a lively, clever face.

'Listen, Crèvecœur, and wonder!' Comines continued. 'King Louis is at Peronne!'

'What!' said the count in astonishment: 'has the duke retreated without a battle? is the town besieged by the French?'

'No,' said d'Hymbercourt, 'the banners of Burgundy have not gone back a foot, and still king Louis is here.'

'Hear the extraordinary truth,' said Comines. 'You know, when you left us, that the conference between the envoys of France and Burgundy was broken up?'

'True; and we dreamt of nothing but war.'

'The duke had protested so furiously against further delay,' said Comines, 'that the council resolved to send defiance to the king, and march forward instantly into

France. Suddenly the French herald rode into the camp, and we thought that Louis had sent defiance first. A council was speedily assembled, and what was our wonder when the herald informed us that Louis, king of France, was scarcely an hour behind, intending to visit Charles, duke of Burgundy, with a small retinue, in order that their differences might be settled at a personal interview !'

'You surprise me, gentlemen,' said Crèvecœur : 'yet cardinal Balue, offended by his master and Burgundian at heart, hinted to me at Plessis that he could place Louis in such a position with regard to Burgundy that the duke might make his own terms of peace. But I never suspected that so old a fox as Louis could have been induced to come into the trap of his own accord. What did the duke say ?'

'These were his words,' Comines replied : '"If Louis comes here with a single heart, he shall be royally welcome. If he is only pretending to trust me, while he executes some of his schemes, let him take care !" He then ordered us all to mount our horses and receive the king.'

'Louis arrived,' continued d'Hymbercourt, 'accompanied by only a score or two of the Scottish Guard and a few gentlemen of his household, among them his astrologer Galeotti.'

'That fellow,' Crèvecœur said, 'is in league with cardinal Balue. I should not be surprised if he helped to persuade the king to come to Peronne.'

'Orleans and Dunois were also with the king,' said Comines. 'They were under arrest in the castle of Loches, but Louis released them. There were besides the provost with two or three of his hangmen, and Oliver, the king's barber. But the whole company was so poorly arrayed that the king looked like an old usurer going with his bailiffs to collect debts.'

'And where is he lodged ?' asked Crèvecœur.

'By his own request, in the castle of Peronne,' replied Comines.

'Why,' exclaimed Crèvecœur, 'he has not only ventured into the lion's den, but thrust his head into its very jaws !'

'Well, Crèvecœur,' said Comines, 'our news is told ; what do you think of it ?'

'It is like a mine charged with powder,' Crèvecœur

answered, 'which I fear it is my fate to explode. When I tell you what has happened in Liege, you will agree that Louis's visit to Peronne is ill-timed.'

He then related the events at Liege and Schonwaldt, to which the two nobles listened with wonder.

They presently reached the banks of the Somme and the ancient walls of the little town of Peronne. Quentin saw that the adjoining meadows were white with the tents of the duke of Burgundy's army, which amounted to about fifteen thousand men.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE INTERVIEW

When princes have dealings with one another, they are forced by the dignity of their rank to restrain their feelings and words, and to avoid any violent display of passion.

Charles of Burgundy was the most impatient and imprudent prince of his time, but he was bound to behave respectfully towards Louis, who was his feudal superior and had paid him the great honour of a personal visit.

When the duke rode out to receive the king, he was attended by his highest officers and principal nobles: he was richly attired and his retinue blazed with gold and silver, while Louis wore a threadbare cloak and had only a few meanly-dressed attendants. Throwing himself from his noble charger, Charles knelt and offered to hold the stirrup while Louis dismounted.

The two princes greeted each other with compliments that sounded kind but were totally insincere. Deceit was natural to Louis, but the duke maintained the pretence with difficulty: the latter was like a large, surly dog, and the former like a stranger who wishes to make friends with it. The king no doubt saw that he had a delicate game to play, and perhaps he more than once repented having begun it. But repentance was too late.

'I blame myself,' he said, 'for not having taken this decisive step sooner. My good kinsman, my present visit will convince you that our quarrels are nothing in my eyes

when compared with the kindness that you and your father showed me when I was an exile from France.'

The duke attempted to twist his harsh features into a polite smile. 'Prince of traitors,' he said to himself, 'how did you repay that kindness ?'

'I shall never forget,' continued the king, 'how generously you treated the poor, heart-broken exile !'

Angry as the duke was, he could not help laughing at Louis's barefaced attempt to assume towards him a tone of friendship. The king took advantage of Charles's more cheerful mood, and repeated to him several jests, which amused the duke for the remainder of their conversation and during the banquet that was later held in the town-hall of Peronne.

At this banquet Louis was alarmed to see that the duke had around him several French nobles of the highest rank, whom his own severity or injustice had driven into exile. It was through fear of them that he requested to be lodged in the castle of Peronne rather than in the town itself.

Louis had placed himself, perhaps rashly, in a dangerous position, but he behaved with the prudence a pilot shows on an unknown coast. He had to exercise constant caution, while the duke was galled by the necessity of suppressing his violent feelings. To both the day was a wearisome one, and they were glad when it at length closed.

As soon as Charles had taken leave of the king for the night, and retired into his own apartment, he gave way to the passion that he had so long suppressed.

Louis was escorted to his lodgings in the castle by courtiers of the duke of Burgundy, and was received at the entrance by a strong guard of men-at-arms. The nobles retired, much pleased by the grace of Louis's manner, and he was left, with only one or two of his personal followers, before a huge tower that occupied a corner of the castle courtyard. The walls of the tower were of a tremendous thickness, the windows very small and crossed by bars of ron.

'I am not to be lodged *there* ?' the king asked with a shudder.

'No,' replied the grey-headed steward, 'God forbid. That tower was once used as a state prison ; dark deeds were done in it : and now, they say, strange lights are seen

there at night, and strange noises heard. Your majesty's apartments are prepared in these lower buildings hard by.'

Louis proceeded to the door of his gloomy apartments, beside which stood a small party of the Scottish Guard, headed by the faithful lord Crawford.

Louis bade him good-night and passed to the door of his bedroom, where Ludovic Lesly stood sentinel.

'Have you heard from your nephew?' asked the king: 'I have lost sight of him since the time he sent me home two prisoners.'

'I have seen this evening,' said Ludovic, 'a groom whom my nephew despatched from Liege where he has lodged the ladies of Croye safe in the bishop's palace.'

'Heaven be praised!' exclaimed the king. The news meant to him that one of his favourite plans had failed, yet he seemed as satisfied as if his scheme had been a brilliant success and sighed as if relieved of a heavy burden.

Entering his chamber, Louis threw himself into a chair and, appearing much exhausted, dismissed all his attendants except Oliver, who, creeping around with noiseless steps, assisted him to prepare for repose. The king was unusually silent, and Oliver was at length tempted to say, 'I never knew your majesty fight so gallantly as you have to-day, and yet you now seem as if you have lost a battle.'

'A battle!' said Louis, looking up: 'say rather, Oliver, I have engaged in a bullfight. Charles of Burgundy is as stubborn as a bull, and I dodged him cleverly. But rejoice with me, Oliver, that my plans concerning those two rambling countesses of Croye and the rebellion in Liege have not taken effect.'

'Unless your majesty tells me some reason,' Oliver replied, 'it is impossible for me to congratulate you on the failure of your favourite schemes.'

'My friend,' said the king, 'I have this day learned more of duke Charles than I knew before. While he thinks he has the game in his own hands, he will not hesitate to drive matters to extremes. I only hinted that the countesses of Croye might fall into the hands of some wild robber before they reached Liege, and he blazed up in a fury. If news had been brought at that moment of the success of William de la Marck, my head would have been very

unsafe. He threatened to hang, draw, and quarter any man who married the young countess without his permission.'

'And he would doubtless be just as much infuriated by disturbances in Liege ?'

'As much, or much more so : but when I resolved to come here, I sent messengers to Liege to repress insurrection for the present.'

'It seems,' said Oliver dryly, 'that the utmost to be hoped from this meeting is that it should not make your condition worse.'

'No game,' answered the king sharply, 'is to be despaired of until it is lost. If nothing occurs to stir the rage of this madman, I am sure of victory. Well, I will go to bed. There is nothing to be done now but to play the game manfully. Charles, like other wild bulls, shuts his eyes when he rushes at his enemy : I have only to watch that moment, and he will be at my mercy.'

CHAPTER XXV

THE EXPLOSION

Next day the king of France set himself by skilful flattery and liberal presents to win the friendship of the duke's chief officers. During a boar-hunt in the forest he was able to speak secretly to many of those who had most influence with Charles, among them d'Hymbercourt and Comines. Such an opportunity of corrupting the ministers of Charles was perhaps the principal object of the king's visit if he failed to trick the duke himself, and Louis's personal exertions did more to establish at the court of Burgundy a party friendly to France than his agents had effected in years.

When Louis returned to Peronne after the hunt, he found a magnificent banquet prepared. The duke sat at the head of a long table and his royal guest was placed on his right hand. Two seats were vacant, and Charles asked his jester, who stood behind him, to whom they belonged.

'They belong, your highness, to the baron d'Hymber-

court and sir Philip des Comines, who are gone so far to fly their falcons that they have forgotten their suppers.'

As the jester spoke, the two nobles entered the room, and after bowing to the two princes, seated themselves in silence.

'Well, sirs,' exclaimed the duke, 'your sport has led you far and late. Comines, you are dejected, and d'Hymbercourt looks sad. How now, sirs? By my honour, you seem as if you were at a funeral, not a feast!'

While the duke spoke, the eyes of all were turned towards d'Hymbercourt and Comines, and the embarrassment and dejection in their faces was so marked that the laughter of the company was gradually hushed and men spoke in whispers to each other as if they expected some strange and important news.

'What does this silence mean, gentlemen?' said the duke, raising his voice.

'My gracious lord,' said Comines, 'as we were about to return from the forest, we met the count of Crèvecœur.'

'How!' exclaimed the duke: 'already returned? I sent him with five hundred men to assist the bishop of Liege. Doubtless, he found all well there?'

'The count himself is waiting,' replied Comines, 'to give your grace his news in private.'

'In Heaven's name,' cried Charles, 'let someone bid Crèvecœur to come to me directly! He comes from the frontiers of Liege, and *I*, at least, have no secrets in that quarter.'

While someone went to summon Crèvecœur, the duke, who was excited by wine, looked impatiently at the door: his guests, curious and anxious, sat with their eyes bent on the table. Louis alone seemed perfectly composed, and continued to converse with the jester.

At length Crèvecœur entered, and Charles at once asked, 'What news from Liege, count?'

'Your highness,' answered the count sadly but firmly, 'the news I bring is more fit for the council board than the feasting table.'

'Out with it, man!' cried the duke. 'I can guess it: Liege is again in mutiny.'

'It is, my lord,' said Crèvecœur very gravely.

'So the harebrained townsmen are again in arms!'

said the duke. 'It could not happen at a better time, for I may at present have the advice of his majesty,' bowing to Louis with bitter, though suppressed anger, 'to teach me how to deal with such mutineers. Have you more news?'

'My lord, the further tidings are heavy for me to tell. William de la Marck, united with the rebels of Liege, has taken the bishop's castle, and murdered him in his own hall.'

'*Murdered him!*' repeated the duke in a deep slow tone: 'Crèvecœur, it is impossible!'

'Alas! my lord!' said the count, 'I have it from an eyewitness, an Archer of the king of France's Scottish Guard.'

'Who no doubt aided this horrible crime!' exclaimed the duke, starting up and stamping his foot furiously. 'Bar the doors of this hall, gentlemen! Let no stranger stir from his seat! Gentlemen of Burgundy, draw your swords!' And turning upon Louis he placed his hand slowly and deliberately upon the hilt of his own weapon. The king neither showed fear nor attempted to defend himself, but only said, 'This news, kinsman, has staggered your reason.'

'No,' replied the duke in a terrible tone, 'but it has awakened my just anger, which I have stifled too long. Treacherous ally! you are in my power, and I thank God for it.'

'Rather thank my folly in sparing you at Montl'héry,' said the king.

The duke still kept his hand on his sword, but refrained from striking a foe who offered no resistance.

Meanwhile wild confusion spread through the hall. The French nobles were few in number, but they started from their seats, prepared to defend their king, and the voice of Dunois was heard above the tumult, addressing the duke of Burgundy, 'Sir duke, you have forgotten that you are a servant of France and that we, your guests, are Frenchmen. If you lift a hand against our king, prepare for our vengeance! Courage, gentlemen, form yourselves round Dunois!'

While he spoke, the venerable lord Crawford forced his way to the head of the table, and threw himself boldly between the king and the duke. 'I have fought for his

father and his grandfather,' he said, half drawing his sword, 'and I will not fail him at this pinch!'

Charles still remained with his hand on his sword, and seemed about to give the signal for a general massacre, when Crèvecœur rushed forward and exclaimed in a voice like a trumpet, 'My lord, beware what you do! Do not spill the blood of your guest and sovereign on your own hearth!'

'Out of my way, Crèvecœur!' answered the duke.

'Let me pray you, my lord,' persisted Crèvecœur, 'to rein your temper, however justly aroused. And you, gentlemen of France, your resistance is useless: forbear, before blood is shed!'

'He is right,' said Louis, cool even at that dreadful moment. 'Orleans, Dunois, Crawford, do not bring on bloodshed by taking offence too hastily. The duke is distressed by the death of a loving friend. Jealousy leads him to suspect me, his king and kinsman, of having conspired in a crime that is horrible to me. My host may murder me, but do not bring death upon yourselves.'

The duke stood with his eyes fixed on the ground for a considerable time, and then said bitterly, 'Crèvecœur, you say well: my debt to this great king shall not be adjusted in angry haste. I will so act that all Europe shall acknowledge my justice. Gentlemen of France, you must give up your arms to my officers.'

'Not one of us,' said Dunois, 'will resign his weapon unless we are assured of our king's safety.'

'Nor will a man of the Scottish Guard,' exclaimed Crawford, 'lay down his arms unless the king of France commands it.'

'Brave Dunois,' said Louis with dignity, 'and you, my faithful Crawford, I trust in my rightful cause more than in resistance, in which many brave lives would be spent in vain. Give up your swords!'

Crawford, at the king's command, threw his sword to Crèvecœur, saying, 'Take it! it is no dishonour to yield it, for we have had no fair play.'

'Hold, gentlemen,' said the duke in a voice broken with passion, 'retain your swords! only promise not to use them. And you, Louis of Valois, must regard yourself as my prisoner, until you are cleared of having abetted

murder. Take him, Crèvecœur, to the castle-tower! Let him choose six of his gentlemen to attend him.'

He started from the table in fierce haste, glanced savagely at the king, and rushed from the room.

'Sirs,' said Louis, looking around him with dignity, 'grief has made your prince frantic. I trust you know your duty as noblemen better than to abet him in his treasonable violence against myself.'

'We are subjects of Burgundy,' answered Crèvecœur, 'and must do our duty as such. We shall make every effort to bring about peace, but meantime we must obey the duke's command.'

'Then,' said the king, 'I desire, as my attendants, Oliver, my barber; Ludovic Lesly, of the Scottish Guard; the provost Tristan, with two of his men; and my trusty Galeotti.'

'Your majesty's wish shall be complied with,' said the count.

'Forward, then, to the new abode,' said the king. 'I know it is strong, and hope it is equally safe.' He rose and, surrounded by a strong guard, proceeded under Crèvecœur's respectful guidance to the castle-tower.

CHAPTER XXVI

UNCERTAINTY

Forty men-at-arms, carrying naked swords and blazing torches, served as the guard of king Louis from the banqueting-hall to the castle: the red smoky light of the torches gave a darker shade to the huge tower.

As the king crossed the courtyard he looked behind him and, seeing Ludovic Lesly, said, 'Are you there, old friend? then I have one true subject with me yet.'

'And a faithful minister also,' whispered Oliver.

'We are all faithful,' said Tristan gruffly; 'for if they put your majesty to death, they would suffer no one of us to survive you.'

The steward meanwhile opened the heavy gate of the tower, and six men entered with torches, showing the way

along a narrow passage and up a rough stone stair. At the top an iron-bound door admitted them to the great hall of the tower, which was completely dark save for the blaze of the torches. The steward apologized to the king for having been unable as yet to put the hall in order: he added that the apartment had hardly been in use since the time of king Charles the Simple.

'King Charles the Simple!' echoed Louis: 'I know the history of the tower now. He was murdered here by a treacherous noble. *Here*, then, my predecessor was slain!'

'Not *here*, your majesty,' said the old steward, 'but in the side chamber that opens from your majesty's bed-chamber.'

He opened a small door at the far end of the hall, which led into a little bedchamber. Some hasty preparations had been made here: tapestry had been fastened up, and a fire lighted in the rusty grate.

'Crèvecœur,' said king Louis, turning to the count and speaking in a low and anxious tone, 'what will your duke do with me?'

'My lord,' replied the count, 'you may judge how the duke must resent this horrible cruelty against his kinsman, and you only can know what right he has to consider it as encouraged by your majesty's agents. But my master is incapable of any underhand practices: whatever he does, will be done in the light of day. It will be the wish of all his counsellors that he should be mild and generous in this matter, as well as just.'

'Ah, Crèvecœur,' said Louis, taking his hand, 'how happy is the prince who has such counsellors as you! If it had only been my fortune to have such as you about *my* person! I request you,' he added, 'send my astrologer Galeotti to me here.'

'He may enter,' answered the count, 'but my orders are that no one quits your apartments. I wish your majesty good-night.'

After the count of Crèvecœur had taken his leave, the sentinels were heard moving to their posts. At length all was still.

'Go into the hall, my friends,' said Louis to Oliver and Tristan, who had entered the bedchamber with him,

'but do not lie down to sleep. Hold yourselves ready, for there is still something of importance to be done to-night.'

Oliver and Tristan found that Ludovic and the provost's two officers had kindled a fire in the hall and were sitting dejectedly on the floor, wrapped in their cloaks. They followed their example, and the whole party sat silent and depressed.

Meanwhile their master, alone in the inner room, underwent agonies. He paced to and fro, clasped his hands, and gave way to the agitation that he had hidden so successfully in public. At length he planted himself opposite the door behind which king Charles the Simple had been murdered, and gave voice to his feelings.

'Charles the Simple! What will posterity call the eleventh Louis? Louis the Fool! Louis the Idiot, who thought these hot-headed Liegeois would remain quiet! who dreamt that the Wild Boar would cease for a moment from his bloodthirsty brutality! who supposed that he could reason with Charles of Burgundy! Fool and double idiot that I was! But the vile Galeotti shall not escape: he and the detestable priest, Balue, have been at the bottom of this. If I ever get out of this danger, I will tear the cardinal's cap from his head. But the other traitor is in my hands. I am yet king enough to punish the star-gazing, lie-coining impostor, who has made a prisoner and a fool of me.'

Opening the door the king summoned Ludovic into his apartment. 'My trusty soldier,' he said, 'I may either live or die: but I would not willingly die, leaving a friend or an enemy unrewarded. I have a friend to be rewarded; that is yourself: I have an enemy to be punished; that is the base, treacherous villain, Galeotti, who by his falsehoods has drawn me into the power of my mortal enemy. I have summoned the traitor here. I wish you, so soon as you can, to close with him and strike him in the heart. Do you understand me?'

'I do, your majesty,' answered Ludovic, 'but this is a matter entirely out of my range. I cannot murder a man in cold blood. If he is a traitor, let him die a traitor's death at the hands of the provost and his men.'

'You say well,' said the king. 'Let it be your duty to

prevent interruption. When Galeotti is admitted and the door shut behind him, draw your weapon and guard the entrance. Let no one intrude. Go, and send the provost to me.'

Ludovic withdrew and a minute afterwards Tristan entered from the hall. 'Welcome, friend,' said the king; 'what do you think of our situation?'

'Unless a reprieve comes from the duke,' said the provost, 'we are like men sentenced to death.'

'Whether we are reprieved or not,' said the king, 'he who lured us into this snare, shall not escape. Tristan, you must stand by me to the end.'

'I will, my lord, while I live,' said Tristan: 'within these walls or elsewhere.'

'That is what I expected of you, my friend,' said Louis: 'but have you good assistants? The traitor is strong, and will, no doubt, shout for help. The Scot will only keep the door, and Oliver is of no use for such work as this.'

'I have John and Michael with me,' said the provost, 'men expert at their work: and we have all resolved to live or die with your majesty. But with whom have we to deal?'

'With Galeotti.—You start, Tristan, but it is as I say. The villain has lured us all here by treachery: he has put us in the hands of the duke of Burgundy without defence.'

'But not without vengeance!' said Tristan. 'I will destroy him, even if I am destroyed at the same time.'

'I trust you,' said the king. 'Put Galeotti to death the moment he leaves the room. I will see the villain once more. I shall love to see the sense of approaching death strike the colour from his ruddy cheeks. I will give you this signal,' he added: 'if I say to the knave at parting, "There is a heaven above us," then let the business go on; but if I say, "Go in peace," you will understand that my purpose is changed. Away and make ready!'

The provost left the apartment and called his two assistants aside. 'Courage, my mates,' he said to them: 'our gracious master has a noble task for us. Galeotti is to be done to death. Michael, screw your pulley into that

beam above the door: and you, John, take the rope from your waist and pass it over the pulley. I will keep the fellow in conversation near the spot, until you adjust the noose under his chin.'

'And then up with the rope,' chuckled John and Michael together.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ACCUSATION

When king Louis asked Crèvecœur to send Galeotti to him, the count dispatched duke Charles's jester in search of the astrologer. The messenger, knowing Galeotti's habits, betook himself at once to the best tavern in Peronne, where he found him engaged in close conversation with a strange-looking woman, who rose to depart at the jester's approach.

'You may rely on this news with absolute certainty' she said, and disappeared among the crowd of guests.

'Sir,' said the jester, presenting himself, 'I have come to guide you to the apartments of Louis of France.'

Galeotti gazed at him suspiciously and answered, 'The hour is late and you are a strange messenger. How if I refuse to come?'

'Ten men-at-arms, whom the count of Crèvecœur has sent with me, will carry you.'

The astrologer, seeing that no escape was possible, followed the jester. 'Do you think,' he said, 'that the king intends me any injury?'

'You can guess that better than I. Remember that an old rat in a trap is disposed to bite.'

Galeotti asked no more questions, and at the castle-gate he was passed from warder to warder until he was at length admitted to the tower.

He noticed that Tristan looked grim, as he conducted him to the king's bedchamber, and the pulley and the rope also caught his eye. He suspected danger, and resolved to defend himself to the last.

Galeotti presented himself boldly before Louis, showing

no shame for the failure of his prophecies or dismay at the monarch's anger.

'Every good star be gracious to your majesty!' he said.

'Look around this apartment,' replied the king: 'and tell me whether my kind stars have not proved faithless. Are you not ashamed, Galeotti, to see me here, a prisoner, when you recollect by what promises I was lured here?'

'And are *you* not ashamed, royal sir,' replied the astrologer, 'to turn from the first frown of fortune? Are you not like the foolish passenger who becomes angry with his pilot because he cannot bring the ship into harbour without meeting occasionally the opposition of winds and currents?'

'But what if the ship is wrecked? I am imprisoned, dethroned, and in danger of life. No, I am a dupe, you an impostor, your pretended science a dream. Go, sir, and think not to escape punishment. *There is a heaven above us!*'

'I could foretell that the issue of your enterprise would be prosperous,' replied Galeotti, without moving; 'but it was in the power of heaven alone to make the path rough or smooth.'

'You foretold,' said the king, 'that the Scotch youth should accomplish his enterprise fortunately for my interest: but the issue of that affair is likely to increase duke Charles's distrust of me, and may do me mortal injury. Your prophecy was directly false.'

'I told you he would be faithful in any honourable task,' answered the astrologer boldly: 'has he not been so? I told you he would be scrupulous in aiding any evil enterprise: has he not proved so? If you doubt it, ask the gipsy, Hayraddin.'

The king, at these words, coloured deeply with shame and anger.

'I told you,' continued the astrologer, 'that the stars showed danger to the person: and has not his path been beset by danger? I told you they showed advantage to the sender: and of that you will soon have the benefit.'

'Soon have the benefit!' exclaimed the king: 'Have I not the result already, in disgrace and imprisonment? This is too insolent! But go! My wrongs shall be avenged. *There is a heaven above us.*'

Galeotti turned to depart. 'Yet stop,' said Louis: 'answer one question. Can your pretended skill discover the hour of your own death?'

'My death shall take place exactly twenty-four hours before that of your majesty.'

'What do you say?' exclaimed Louis. 'Wait one moment. Did you say *my* death should follow *yours* so closely?'

'Within twenty-four hours,' repeated the astrologer firmly.

'Galeotti,' said the king, taking him by the arm and leading him from the door, 'I have been a good master to you. Be open with me, I entreat you. Is there really anything in this art of yours? Will this Scot's mission be, in fact, propitious to me? And is the measure of our lives so *very* nearly matched? To one in my condition truth is worth kingdoms.'

'And I have spoken it to your majesty,' said Galeotti, 'at the risk that you might turn upon me in passion and rend me.'

'Who, I, Galeotti?' replied Louis mildly. 'Alas, you misunderstand me. Tell me sincerely: have you fooled me? or is your science true?'

'Time only, your majesty, will convince you. A day or two's patience will prove or disprove what I have said concerning the young Scot. And I repeat that from the moment my last groan is drawn, only twenty-four hours will remain to you for confession and penitence.'

Louis led Galeotti towards the door, and as he opened it pronounced in a loud voice: 'We will talk more of this to-morrow. Go in peace, Galeotti! *Go in peace! Go in peace!*'

Afraid that the provost might still mistake his purpose, he led the astrologer into the hall, and made a private signal to Tristan.

Galeotti sat down by the fireplace and looked suspiciously at Louis's attendants. He put his hand into his vest, where the handle of a very sharp dagger was placed conveniently for his grasp.

The blazing fire showed the rough features of Ludovic Lesly, who lay slumbering heavily; the pale and anxious face of Oliver; the discontented savage provost, with his



GALEOTTI AT THE CASTLE OF PERONNE

two attendants; and, in strong contrast to all these, the stately form and commanding features of the astrologer.

Thus the night passed. At dawn the king summoned Oliver, who saw with astonishment the change that one night of mortal anxiety had made in Louis's looks. The king recounted the various methods by which he had tried to form friends at the court of Burgundy, and charged Oliver to continue the attempt as soon as he should be permitted to stir outside the castle.

Louis presently sent for the astrologer, in whom he seemed to have renewed his faith, and held a long consultation with him. The result gave him more confidence, and Crèvecœur, who visited the king soon after, was amazed at Louis's calmness, especially as he knew that the duke had passed several hours in a state of mind that rendered the king's position very perilous.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HUMILIATION

The duke of Burgundy, who had never mastery over his passions, spent a disturbed night. D'Hymbercourt and Comines, who shared his bedchamber, saw him distracted by sorrow, anger, desire of revenge, and the sense of honour that forbade him to take vengeance upon Louis while the king was his guest.

He refused to throw off his clothes or prepare for sleep, but spent the night in a succession of violent bursts of passion. At times he talked incessantly to his attendants, who were afraid his senses would give way. He dwelt upon the merits of the murdered bishop, and worked himself into such a transport of grief that he threw himself upon the bed choking with sobs. Then, starting from his couch, he uttered furious threats, that he would take bloody vengeance on de la Marck, on the people of Liege, and on *him* who was the author of the whole.

Another day and night passed in the same way; for the duke scarcely ate or drank, never changed his dress,

and altogether behaved like one whose rage might end in utter madness. But by degrees he became more composed, and began to pay heed to the advice of his ministers. Little more was needed than a hint from any of the counsellors to push the duke to some desperate action. But the nobles of Burgundy, from respect for the person of a king, from regard for the public faith, which had been pledged when Louis threw himself into their power, and perhaps from gratitude for the king's bribes, recommended moderate measures.

Comines suggested that perhaps Louis had not directly encouraged the murder of the bishop, and argued that any violence done to the king was sure to bring unhappy consequences on France and Burgundy. It was likely, he said, that England would take advantage of the discord that must ensue, and invade France. Finally he urged that the duke should be content to establish a fair treaty between the countries, taking such security from the king as should make it difficult for him to disturb the peace of Burgundy in future. He was supported in his arguments by d'Hymbercourt, Crèvecœur, and others.

The duke listened with knitted brows. But when Crèvecœur said that he did not believe Louis had any hand in de la Marck's atrocious act, Charles darted a fierce look at him, and exclaimed, 'Have you too, Crèvecœur, heard the gold of France clink? Dare anyone say that Louis has not encouraged these feuds in Flanders?'

'My lord,' said Crèvecœur, 'my hand is more used to steel than to gold. No doubt, the intrigues of Louis were the original cause of these commotions; but I believe that one of his servants publicly protested against the death of the bishop, and I could produce the man, if your grace wished.'

'Produce him,' said the duke. 'Can you doubt that, even in the height of anger, we desire to act justly? I will see Louis myself, charge him with his crimes, and state to him the penalty that I demand. Let your witness attend at the castle one hour before noon.'

With these words the duke strode out of the room.

'Louis's safety and the honour of Burgundy depend on a cast of the dice,' said d'Hymbercourt to Crèvecœur and Comines. 'Hasten to the castle, Comines: explain

to Louis the storm that is approaching. I trust this Lifeguardsman will not betray any awkward secrets.'

'The young man,' said Crèvecœur, 'seems prudent as well as bold. I must go and search for him, and also the young countess of Croye, whom I fetched from Charleroi full speed by the duke's orders.'

Comines went quickly to Louis's quarters in the tower. The king listened carefully to his advice and flattered him with praise of his good sense. 'I wish, Philip,' he said, 'that I had such a servant as you! I should not then be in this unfortunate situation. But you are the servant of Charles of Burgundy, and you will best serve him by reconciling him with Louis of France. In doing this you will serve us both, and I at least shall be grateful. What does your duke expect of me?'

'The duke has given me no message, my lord,' replied Comines; 'he will soon explain his own pleasure; but I think your majesty should be prepared for certain proposals,—for example, the final cession of these towns here upon the Somme.'

'I expected as much,' said Louis.

'That you should disown the Liegeois and William de la Marck.'

'Willingly.'

'Ample security will be required by hostages or occupation of fortresses, that France will not again stir up rebellion among the Flemings.'

'Let that pass too. Is your budget of hints yet ended?'

'The duke of Burgundy desires that his dominions should be independent.'

'And how dares the duke,' exclaimed Louis, starting up and showing an unusual degree of emotion, 'how dares he propose such terms to his sovereign?'

'Your majesty's interference with the duke's dependents in Flanders,' answered Comines calmly, 'will excuse my master's conduct.'

'Comines, Comines!' said Louis, pacing the room in thought, 'you cannot mean that the duke will insist on all these hard conditions?'

'At least I would have your majesty prepared to discuss them all.'

'Well, I will consider,' replied the king; 'but you have

reached the end of the duke's requests? Nothing can remain.'

'My lord,' said Comines, 'one thing yet remains. The illustrious duke of Orleans wishes to marry countess Isabelle of Croye: my master expects your majesty will assent to the marriage and unite with him in endowing the noble couple with a fitting estate.'

'Never, never!' cried the king, his suppressed emotion bursting out. 'While my daughter lives, Orleans shall not marry another.'

'Your majesty,' said Comines, 'consider what power you have to prevent what is proposed.'

'Comines,' replied Louis, 'such a marriage will bring utter destruction upon my kingdom. I have only one feeble boy, and Orleans is the next heir. The union of Orleans with my daughter has been the favourite plan of my whole life: I have schemed for it, fought for it, prayed for it, and sinned for it. Philip, I will not give it up! Think, man, think! your quick brain can invent some other sacrifice that will satisfy the duke. Philip, pity me!'

'My lord and king,' replied Comines, 'I do sympathize with your distress. My advice is that you humour the duke: if he is unopposed, his fury will die out, and you will presently find him more friendly. Mark this: every shadow of treaty will be broken off if your majesty does not renounce William de la Marck and the Liegeois.'

'I have already said that I will disown them,' said the king.

'The duke will demand your help to put the insurrection down, and your presence to witness his punishment of the rebels.'

'My honour will scarcely permit that,' answered Louis.

'It would be unsafe for your majesty to refuse,' said Comines. 'Charles is determined to show the people of Flanders that if they mutiny, France will not save them from the vengeance of Burgundy.'

'I will speak plainly, sir Philip,' said the king. 'If I could only delay the matter, might not the Liegeois hold their town against duke Charles? The rascals are numerous and steady.'

'With the help of a thousand archers of France they

might have done something; but, without them, what chance will they have of holding their town? The breaches made in its walls long since by Charles are still unrepaired.'

'The idiots!' said the king. 'If they have thus neglected their own safety, they do not deserve my protection. I will not quarrel with the duke for their sake.'

'The next point, I fear, will touch your majesty more closely.'

'Ah, you mean that infernal marriage! I will not consent to the breach of the contract between Orleans and my daughter Joan. It would be taking the sceptre of France from me and my descendants, for my son will die early and without heir. This match has been my thought by day, my dream by night. I tell you, sir Philip, I cannot give it up!'

'Would you agree to the proposed marriage between the duke of Orleans and Isabelle of Croye, if I could convince you that the countess's affections are so firmly fixed on another that it is likely she will refuse the match?'

King Louis sighed. 'Alas,' he said, 'my good friend! *Her* affections indeed! She will be forced to accept Orleans. Besides, there is little hope of her resisting the suit of such a lover.'

'Your majesty undervalues the obstinate courage of this young lady, and I have learned from Crèvecœur that her affections are set upon a young gentleman, who rendered her many services on the road.'

'Ha!' said the king, 'an Archer of my Guard, by name Quentin Durward?'

'The same, I think,' said Comines; 'he was made prisoner with the countess.'

'Now heaven be praised!' said the king, 'and all honour to the learned Galeotti, who read in the stars that this youth's destiny was connected with mine! If the maiden is so attached to him as to resist the will of Burgundy, this young Scot has indeed been useful to me. And now, Philip, have you told me all your master's intentions?'

'I have told you, sir, the points on which he is at present most disposed to insist. I can predict nothing with certainty: you know my master's temper, and how quickly

it is changed into fury. If clearer evidence of your majesty's plots with the Liegeois and William de la Marck were to be found, the result might be terrible. There is strange news from that quarter: they say de la Marck has married the countess Hameline of Croye. There is a report also that a herald from de la Marck is approaching Peronne: this is likely to drive the duke frantic with rage. Remain on your guard, your majesty: be guided by events: and, above all, avoid angering the duke.'

'Sir Philip,' said the king, as Comines prepared to depart, 'you will tire one day of teaching policy to the Bull of Burgundy: if Louis is then alive, you will have a friend in the court of France.'

CHAPTER XXIX

THE LOVERS' MEETING

On the morning that preceded the meeting of the two princes, Oliver laboured skilfully, both with presents and promises, to make interest for Louis in every quarter, so that when the duke's anger should blaze out, all around should conspire to suppress it. He glided from tent to tent, from house to house, securing the favour of many Burgundian nobles. He obtained, by the favour of the count of Crèvecœur, an interview between lord Crawford and Quentin Durward, on the plea of private affairs.

The meeting between the two Scots was cordial. 'You are a singular youth,' said Crawford, stroking young Durward's head. 'In truth, you have had great good fortune, since you joined king Louis's Archers.'

'I fear,' said Quentin, with downcast eyes, 'I shall soon bear that title no longer, since I intend to resign the service of the Archer-Guard.'

Crawford's face darkened with displeasure. 'So, young man,' he said sternly, 'you have learnt how to trim your sails to the wind. Your journey has given you some pretty tales to tell about king Louis; and you are turning Burgundian, that you may make your own little profit by telling them to duke Charles.'

'Neither question nor torture,' answered Quentin,

'shall draw from me a word to king Louis's harm. My oath of duty forbids my disclosing anything I may have discovered in his service. But I will not remain in that service, in which, besides the perils of fair battle with my enemies, I am exposed to the dangers of being ambushed by my friends.'

'Young man,' said Crawford, 'I partly guess your meaning. You have met foul play on the road, and you think you have reason to charge the king with being the author of it?'

'I was threatened with foul play,' answered Quentin, 'but I had the good fortune to escape it. Whether his majesty is guilty in the matter, I leave to his own conscience to declare. He received me when I was a wandering stranger, and I will not load him in his adversity with accusations that may be unjust, since I heard them only from the vilest mouths.'

'My dear boy,' said Crawford, taking him in his arms, 'you think like a Scot. And now, tell me, has the king heard of this brave resolve of yours? for, poor man, he has need in his peril to know what he has to reckon upon.'

'I really can hardly tell,' answered Quentin; 'but I assured his astrologer of my resolution.'

'May heaven strengthen your good intention, my lad,' said lord Crawford. 'Be in no hurry to leave the Archers; for there will be good blows going presently in open fight.'

'Stay, my lord,' said Quentin: 'I must mention that there is a person who has learned from me these facts that should at present remain concealed for the sake of king Louis's safety. She, being under no oath to the king, may not feel bound to secrecy. Use your interest with the count of Crèvecœur to permit me an interview with the countess Isabelle of Croye, and I do not doubt I can persuade her to be silent on this matter.'

The old soldier mused for a long time, then shook his head, and at length said, 'There is something in all this that I do not understand. The countess Isabelle of Croye! an interview with a lady of her birth and possessions! and you, a raw Scotch lad, so confident of persuading her! But I will speak to Crèvecœur; and, as he fears that duke Charles may act rashly, I think he may grant your request.'

The old lord left the apartment, shrugging his shoulders. He returned a few minutes later, chuckling to himself. 'Upon my word, countryman,' he said, 'you will never lose a fair lady through faintness of heart! Crèvecœur swallowed your proposal like a cup of vinegar, and swore that if there were less at stake than the honour of princes and the peace of kingdoms, you should never see so much as the print of the countess's foot. Come along, sir: your interview with her must be brief, but I fancy you know how to make the most of little time—ho! ho! ho!'

Durward flushed scarlet, vexed to see his love laughed at. He followed lord Crawford in silence to the convent in which the countess was lodged, and found the count of Crèvecœur in the parlour.

'So, young gallant,' said the latter sternly, 'you must see the fair companion of your travels once again?'

'Yes, my lord,' answered Quentin firmly; 'and I must see her alone.'

'That shall never be,' said the count. 'Lord Crawford, the countess Isabelle, the daughter of my old friend and the richest heiress in Burgundy, has confessed a foolish regard for this young Scot. They shall not meet alone.'

'Then I will not speak a word to the countess in your presence,' said Quentin, much delighted. 'You have told me what I did not dare even to hope.'

'Yes, my friend,' said Crawford, 'you have been imprudent: and since there is a good stout grating across the parlour, I would advise you to let them talk through it. Come, man! the life of a king is not to be weighed against a minute's talk between these two!'

So saying he dragged off Crèvecœur, who left the room very reluctantly.

The countess Isabelle entered a moment after on the other side of the grating, and no sooner saw Quentin alone in the parlour than she exclaimed, 'My friend, my preserver, my only faithful and constant friend!'

As she spoke she stretched her hand to him through the grating and even allowed him to retain it while he covered it with kisses and tears. She only said, 'Durward, if we were likely ever to meet again, I would not permit this folly.'

At length she withdrew her hand, saying, 'I have

learned from the old Scottish lord that you have a request to make. Let it only be reasonable, and you cannot ask too much of me. But, O! do not speak hastily! do not say,' she added, looking timidly round, 'anything that might, if overheard, do harm to us both!'

'Fear not, noble lady,' said Quentin sadly; '*here* I cannot forget the distance that fate has placed between us, or expose you to the blame of your proud kindred for having won the devoted love of one poorer and less powerful, not perhaps less noble, than themselves.'

'Hush! hush!' said Isabelle; 'for your own sake, for mine, be silent on this subject. Tell me what it is you have to ask of me.'

'I ask you,' replied Quentin, 'to forgive one who, for his own selfish ends, has behaved as your enemy. Listen: king Louis deserves to be denounced by you as a wily and treacherous statesman. But if you accuse him now of encouraging your flight and planning to throw you into the hands of de la Marck, he will probably be killed or dethroned; at all events there will be a most bloody war between France and Burgundy.'

'These evils shall not be brought about through me,' said the countess. 'But how shall I act?'

'Say nothing to the duke concerning Louis,' answered Durward, 'except what you yourself positively know to be the truth. The council of Burgundy must treat him as innocent until they have direct proof of his guilt.'

As he ended, the convent bell tolled. 'That is a signal,' said the countess, 'that we must part for ever! But do not forget me, Durward: I will never forget you—your faithful services——'

She could speak no more, but again stretched out her hand, which was again pressed to Quentin's lips.

Crèvecœur and Crawford, who had witnessed through a hidden opening in the wall all that had passed, now re-entered the room. The count was in a raging passion. 'To your room, young mistress!' he exclaimed to Isabelle, who retired in haste. 'And you, sir,' he continued to Quentin, 'the time will come when the interests of kings and kingdoms no longer depend on you: you shall then learn the penalty of your boldness in raising your beggarly eyes——'

'Hush, hush, Crèvecœur!' said the old lord: 'and you, Quentin, away to your quarters. You need not be so scornful, Crèvecœur: Quentin Durward is as much a gentleman as the king, only not so rich.'

'Well, well, my lord,' answered the count, 'I am content to overlook what has passed, but I will take care these young people never meet again.'

'Do not be too sure of that, Crèvecœur,' said Crawford, laughing.

'You are trying to disturb my peace of mind,' said the count. 'But hark! they are tolling the summons to the castle.'

CHAPTER XXX

THE INVESTIGATION

At the first stroke of the bell duke Charles, attended by an armed guard, entered the hall of the castle-tower. King Louis rose and took two steps towards the duke; then he stood still with an air of dignity. His composure had an evident effect upon his rival, who checked the hasty step with which he had entered the hall.

The duke resolved to treat Louis with the courtesy due to his high station, though he was scarcely able to control the thirst for revenge that raged in his breast. His voice was hoarse and broken; his limbs shook; he frowned, and bit his lip until the blood came. Every look and movement expressed his fury. The king had good reason for fear, but he was determined to meet the duke's violence with calmness.

The princes left the tower, and entered the castle-yard, which was filled with the duke's bodyguard and men-at-arms. Crossing the court, they entered the council-hall. Two chairs of state had been erected, the king's being raised two steps higher than the duke's; about twenty of the chief nobles sat on either hand.

Duke Charles, having bowed slightly to the royal chair, bluntly began as follows:

'My good counsellors, we have lately had the most dreadful proof of how our territories are disturbed by the

rebellion of our subjects. The countess Isabelle of Croye and her aunt have been guilty of a scandalous flight, to take refuge with a foreign power; my beloved ally the bishop of Liege has been wickedly murdered; and the treacherous city of Liege has rebelled. I have been informed that these sad events may be traced to the interference of a mighty neighbour. If this proves true,' said the duke, setting his teeth, 'why should I not take measures to close up at the very source the main spring from which these evils have flowed upon us?'

The duke spoke the last sentence in a tone that made all the counsellors tremble, and turned the king's cheek pale for a moment. Louis, however, instantly recovered his courage and addressed the council in a calm tone.

'Nobles of France and Burgundy,' he said, 'let me speak plainly: it is I—his lord, his kinsman, his ally—whom the duke charges with these hateful deeds. But is it to be supposed that I should have thrown myself into his power, while I was practising such treachery against him? No doubt some of the villains who committed those horrible treasons at Schonwaldt have been busy with my name: but I have given them no right to use it. If two silly women sought refuge at my court, does it follow that I invited them? No, for since courtesy prevented my sending them back prisoners to Burgundy, I placed them in the hands of the venerable bishop'—here Louis pressed his handkerchief to his eyes—'hoping that he would reconcile their lord to them. My motives have been fair and honourable, and the duke's suspicions are unworthy.'

'My lord, my lord,' said Charles, breaking in as soon as the king paused, 'I intend to make a solemn inquiry into these matters. Let the countess Isabelle of Croye come hither.'

As the young lady was brought in, supported by the countess of Crèvecœur, Charles exclaimed harshly, 'So, sweet princess! what do you think of the fair work you have made between two great princes and two mighty countries? Sit down, mistress, and tell us at your leisure what fiend possessed you to fly from your native country.'

'I was determined not to marry Campo-Basso,' said Isabelle, 'and I hoped to obtain protection in France.'

'And doubtless you were well assured of the protection of the French king?' said Charles.

'I thought myself assured,' answered the countess; 'otherwise I should not have taken so decided a step.' Here Charles looked at Louis with a bitter smile: the king's glance was firm, but his lip grew white. 'But my information concerning king Louis's intentions towards us,' continued the countess, 'came almost entirely from my unhappy aunt, and her opinions were formed upon the words of persons whom I have since discovered to be the most faithless wretches in the world.' She then stated what she had learnt of the treachery of Marthon and Hayraddin, and added that Magraubin, who had first advised their flight, was capable of pretending to be an agent of Louis.

All remained silent after the countess had finished her tale. The duke bent his fierce, dark eyes on the ground: at length, looking upwards, he said, 'Will king Louis tell me why he maintained these ladies at his court, if they did not go there by his invitation?'

'I received them out of compassion,' answered the king, 'but took an early opportunity of placing them under the protection of your ally, the bishop.'

Charles looked far from satisfied at this reply, and said abruptly, 'Tell me, king Louis, would it not be well to dispose of this young lady in marriage, before she sets more kings by the ears?'

Louis, though he foresaw the unwelcome proposal that would next be made, assented calmly, but the countess came forward timidly, and kneeling before the duke's throne, addressed him: 'Noble duke of Burgundy, impose upon me what penalty you please for having left your dominions without permission. I place my lands and castles at your disposal, and pray you only to grant me sufficient to maintain me in a convent for the rest of my life.'

'Arise, countess Isabelle,' said Charles, 'I do not intend to deprive you of your estates: on the contrary, I will add largely to them.'

'Alas, my lord,' said the countess, still on her knees, 'I fear your grace's well-meant goodness even more than your displeasure, since it compels me——'

'What!' exclaimed duke Charles, 'will you thwart

my wishes at every turn? Up, mistress, and withdraw for the present. Obey me, or beware.'

The countess of Crèvecœur raised her young friend and led her from the hall.

Quentin Durward was next summoned. His uncle had provided him with the arms and dress of an Archer, and he made a fine figure. His youth too won the counsellors' favour, for no one could easily believe that the wily Louis would have chosen so young an accomplice. At the duke's command Quentin commenced an account of his journey with the ladies of Croye, stating that king Louis had instructed him to escort them safely to the bishop of Liege.

'Did you follow the king's instructions exactly?' asked the duke.

'No, your grace,' replied Quentin: 'instead of crossing the river Maes near Namur, I kept the left bank, where the road to Liege was shorter and safer.'

'Why did you make this change?' said the duke.

'Because I began to suspect my guide,' answered Quentin.

'Now mark my next questions,' said the duke. 'Reply truly to them, or I will have you hanged. Who was your guide? who supplied him? why did you suspect him?'

Quentin answered: 'The guide was a gipsy, Hayraddin: he was recommended by the provost, Tristan: I suspected him because near Namur I heard him arranging a plan with one of de la Marck's soldiers to seize the ladies who were under my protection.'

'Did these villains mention their having king Louis's orders for surprising the escort, and carrying away the ladies?' asked the duke sternly.

'If the rogues had said so,' replied Quentin, 'how could I have believed their word against the king's? His majesty sent me to protect these ladies, and I did so to the extent of my power. I understood the king's instructions to be honourable, and I executed them honourably.'

When Louis heard Durward's answer, he drew his breath deeply: the duke looked disconcerted. 'You are a faithful messenger,' he said with a sneer. 'But listen, Archer: who ordered you to parade the streets of Liege at the head of the mutineers who afterwards cruelly murdered the bishop? and why, in the speech that you made after the murder, did you assume authority as king

Louis's agent among the villains who had just committed the crime ?'

'My lord,' said Quentin, 'I did not claim to be an envoy of France in the town of Liege ; the people themselves clamoured that I was one and refused to believe me when I disclaimed the title. I told this to the bishop's supporters, and advised them to defend the castle. I did, it is true, use the influence that my supposed character gave me, to save the countess Isabelle from extreme danger, protect my own life, and, so far as I could, check the thirst for slaughter. I had no instructions from the king of France regarding Liege, far less instructions to encourage mutiny there.'

'My young companion and prisoner,' said Crèvecœur, unable any longer to remain silent, 'you acted with spirit and good sense ; and king Louis cannot justly be blamed for your deeds.'

There was a murmur of assent from the other nobles, which sounded joyfully in the ears of king Louis, while it gave no little offence to Charles. He rolled his eyes angrily round, and an outburst of rage seemed likely, when Comines announced the arrival of a herald from Liege.

'Admit him instantly,' exclaimed the duke. 'I will learn from him more of his employer's plans than this young man seems willing to tell me.'

CHAPTER XXXI

THE HERALD

All were curious to see the herald whom the rebellious Liegeois had dared to send to the haughty duke of Burgundy, while he was so incensed against them. The herald, who was now brought forward, wore a dress, on every part of which the boar's head, his master's arms, was repeated : his bonnet was in the shape of a boar's head with bloody tongue and tusks.

'Who are you, in the devil's name ?' said Charles of Burgundy.

'I am Red Boar,' answered the herald boldly, 'sent here by William de la Marck, elected bishop of Liege——'

'Ha!' exclaimed Charles; but subduing his wrath, he made a sign to him to proceed.

'And count of Croye, in right of his wife, the countess Hameline.'

The duke's astonishment at the herald's audacity seemed to strike him dumb. He remained with his eyes bent on the ground, as if unwilling to betray the passion that gleamed in them.

The envoy proceeded, 'In my master's name, I request you to desist from interfering with the free city of Liege, as you did at the request of the late unworthy bishop——'

'Ha!' the duke exclaimed again.

'Also to rebuild its walls and fortifications; and to acknowledge my master, William de la Marck, as bishop.'

'Have you finished?' said the duke.

'Not yet,' replied the envoy: 'I further request your grace to withdraw at once the garrison placed by you in the castle belonging to the lady Hameline of Croye. My noble master will make fitting provision for the lady Isabelle.'

'He is generous,' said the duke scornfully.

'I would not be in that fool's coat,' said the jester aside to Crèvecœur: 'the duke is giving him rope, and he will soon hang himself.'

'One word more,' said Red Boar, 'from my master concerning his trusty ally, the king of France——'

'Ha!' exclaimed the duke fiercely.

'It is rumoured that you, Charles of Burgundy, have placed the king under restraint. My master bids you release his royal ally immediately, or receive defiance from him.'

'Have you done?' said the duke.

'I have,' answered the herald; 'and await your Grace's answer.'

'Now, by heaven——' said the duke; but before he could proceed further, Louis arose and struck in with a tone of authority.

'Pardon me, my friend,' said the king; 'I claim the right to make first reply to this insolent fellow. Sir, carry back word to the outlaw and murderer, William de la Marck, that the king of France will be presently before Liege, to avenge the murder of his late beloved kinsman, Louis, bishop of Liege; and that he proposes to hang

de la Marck alive for his insolence in calling himself his ally.'

'Add on my part,' said Charles, 'whatever else may not misbecome a prince to send to a common thief and murderer. And begone!—Yet stay! let him be scourged till his bones are laid bare!'

In spite of his natural boldness, the envoy of the Wild Boar of Ardennes now became pale.

'Here! drag him to the market-place!' continued the duke. 'Slash him with whips! Upon the Red Boar! Haloo, haloo!'

Four or five large hounds caught the well-known notes with which the duke concluded, and began to bay as if the boar were just roused from his lair.

'Since the ass has put on the boar's hide,' said King Louis, 'I would set the dogs on him.'

'Right, right!' exclaimed duke Charles. 'Uncouple the hounds! We will course him from the door of the castle to the east gate.'

'I trust your grace will treat me as a beast of chase,' said the fellow boldly, 'and allow me a fair start.'

'You are only vermin,' said the duke: 'still, you shall have sixty yards in advance. Away, away, sirs! we will see this sport.' The council broke up in a tumult, and all hurried, none faster than the two princes, to enjoy the pastime.

The Red Boar, winged with terror, and having half a score of fierce hounds hard at his heels, encouraged by the blowing of horns and the cheering of the hunters, flew like the wind. None of the spectators, not even Charles himself, was so delighted with the sport as king Louis, who saw in it a means of diverting the duke's anger. He laughed till the tears ran from his eyes, and, in his rapture, caught hold of the duke's cloak, as if to support himself: the duke in turn flung his arm around the king's shoulder.

At length the hounds seized the herald, pulled him down, and would soon have throttled him, if the duke had not called out, 'Take them off him! He has run so well that I will not have him killed.'

Several officers accordingly busied themselves in taking off the dogs. At this moment, while the duke was too

much engaged to notice, Oliver the Devil, gliding behind King Louis, whispered in his ear, 'The herald is none other than the gipsy, Hayraddin. He must not speak to the duke.'

'He must die,' answered Louis in the same tone; 'dead men tell no tales.'

One instant afterwards, the provost Tristan, to whom Oliver had given the hint, stepped before the king and the duke, and said in his blunt manner, 'Your majesty and your grace, this piece of game is mine, and I claim him. He is marked with my stamp: the lily of France is branded on his shoulder. He is a villain, and has slain the king's subjects, robbed churches——'

'Enough, enough,' said duke Charles, 'he is the king of France's property. What will your majesty do with him?'

'If he is left to my disposal,' said the king, 'he shall dance in the air at a rope's end.'

The duke laughed heartily, 'Ah, Louis, Louis!' he said, 'you are a merry companion: I wish that you were as faithful a monarch. I cannot help thinking often of the jovial time we used to spend together.'

'You may bring it back when you wish,' said Louis. 'I will grant you fair terms and I will swear to observe them.'

'Well,' said the duke; 'will you go with me to punish this murdering de la Marck and the Liegeois?'

'I will,' said the king, 'with my whole army.'

'No, no,' said the duke, 'that is more than is necessary. Your Scottish Guard and two hundred horsemen will be enough: a large army might——'

'Might be dangerous, eh, my friend?' said the king. 'Well, you shall dictate the number of my attendants.'

'And you will agree to the countess Isabelle of Croye's marriage to the duke of Orleans?'

'Kinsman,' said the king, 'you drive a hard bargain. The duke is betrothed to my daughter Joan. Be generous; do not insist on this. Let us speak rather of the towns of the Somme.'

'My council will speak to your majesty of those,' said Charles. 'But, unless you consent to this marriage, I must break up our conference.'

'Judge how much I wish to oblige you, kinsman,' said

the king. 'I promise that if the parties consent, I will not hinder the match.'

'All else can be easily settled by our ministers,' said the duke; 'and we are once more friends.'

'May heaven be praised!' said Louis. 'Oliver,' he added aside to his favourite, who was always at his side, 'tell Tristan to deal quickly with that gipsy.'

CHAPTER XXXII

THE EXECUTION

In consequence of the reconciliation of the two princes, the Burgundian guards were withdrawn from the castle and the abode of the king was removed from the grim tower. Confidence and friendship seemed to be established between Charles and Louis, but the latter was aware that he was still under suspicion.

Though great men frequently need base tools, they usually abandon them to their fate as soon as they find them no longer useful. This had happened to the gipsy Hayraddin; he was placed by Tristan in the hands of those faithful servants, John and Michael, to be executed without loss of time. Followed by a few guards and a large rabble, he was marched off to the neighbouring forest, where the hangmen proposed to string him up to the first suitable tree.

They stopped beside a tall oak, and placing the wretched criminal on a bank under guard, they began their preparations. At that moment, Hayraddin detected in the crowd Quentin Durward, who had followed thinking he recognized the herald as his faithless guide.

When the hangmen informed him that all was ready, Hayraddin calmly asked a single favour from them. 'I only ask,' he said, 'to speak for ten minutes with that Archer of the Scottish Guard.'

The executioners hesitated, but Michael recollecting that Quentin Durward was believed to stand high in king Louis's favour, they resolved to permit the interview.

Quentin was shocked at the appearance of the condemned man. His fine clothes had been rent to tatters

by the dogs: his cheek and lip were pale, yet his glistening eye and smiling mouth seemed to defy death.

'I must speak with him in privacy,' said Hayraddin, as Quentin approached.

'We can hardly allow that,' said John.

'I am tied hand and foot,' said the gipsy. 'You can keep guard around me, though out of earshot. The Archer is your own king's servant. And if I give you ten gold pieces——'

'Hand them to me,' answered Michael.

'Pay the bloodhounds their fee,' said Hayraddin to Durward; 'I was plundered of every coin when they took me. It is worth your while.'

Quentin paid the executioners, and they retreated out of hearing, keeping a careful eye on the criminal's movements.

'I have a favour to ask,' said Hayraddin; 'but first I will pay you for it.'

'Ask the favour, and keep your reward,' answered Quentin: 'I remember enough of your good offices of old.'

'I loved you,' said Hayraddin, 'for your service to my brother Magraubin: and I would have helped you to marry a wealthy wife. You wore Hameline's scarf, and that misled me. But listen: I came here in this disguise, moved by a great reward from de la Marck, and hoping for a yet greater one from king Louis, not merely to bear the message of defiance that you heard, but to tell the king an important secret.'

'It was a fearful risk,' said Durward.

'It was paid for as such, and such it has proved,' answered the gipsy. 'De la Marck tried before to communicate with Louis by means of Marthon; she told to the astrologer all that happened on the journey and at Schonwaldt; but if her tidings reached Louis at all, it was only in the form of prophecy. But hear my secret; William de la Marck has assembled a strong force within the city of Liege, and is increasing it daily by means of the bishop's treasures; but he does not intend to risk a battle with Burgundy, still less to stand a siege in the town. He will act as follows: he will allow the hot-brained Charles to sit down before the place without opposition, and in the night he will attack the besiegers with his whole force. He will have many men in French

armour, who will shout the French battle-cries, as if there was a strong body of French in the city. This will throw the Burgundians into confusion ; and if king Louis, with such soldiers as he has with him, supports his efforts, the Wild Boar hopes to overthrow the whole Burgundian army. There is my secret. Forward or prevent the enterprise, as you will ; sell the news to king Louis or to duke Charles, I do not care. I only grieve that I cannot spring the plot like a mine, to the destruction of them all.'

'It is indeed an important secret,' said Quentin solemnly. 'And now tell me your request : I will grant it, if it is in my power.'

'It is on behalf of my pony, the only living thing that may miss me. A mile south of this place you will find him feeding by a deserted hut. Take him and make much of him.'

'I swear to you that I will,' answered Quentin.

'Then farewell!' said Hayraddin. 'Yet stay! here is a note from the silly wife of the Wild Boar to her niece. I see by your look I have chosen a willing messenger. Farewell!'

Quentin turned sadly away, and bending his course towards the forest, easily found the gipsy's pony.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A FAIR PRIZE

When Quentin Durward returned to Peronne, a council was sitting that had the most extraordinary influence on his fortunes.

King Louis had been consulting the duke as to the number of troops that should attend him in their joint expedition against Liege. He plainly saw that Charles wished to call into his camp as few Frenchmen as possible, and, anxious to secure the duke's good will, he did not resist his proposals.

The king, however, while he humbled himself to Charles, indulged his thirst for revenge against Balue, who had conspired with Galeotti to betray him to the duke of Burgundy. He ordered Tristan, who was to move up the

French forces, to seize the cardinal, and shut him up in an iron cage.

As soon as Louis had arranged the number of the French troops, he was called upon by his host to give public approval to the marriage of the duke of Orleans and Isabelle of Croye. He consented with a heavy sigh.

'Crèvecœur has communicated with Orleans,' said the duke, 'and finds him so dead to the honour of wedding a royal bride that he agreed most gladly to marry the countess of Croye.'

'He is ungrateful,' said Louis; 'but the matter shall be as you wish, kinsman, if you obtain the consent of the countess as well.'

'Do not be afraid of that,' said Charles; and accordingly the duke of Orleans and the countess of Croye, the latter again accompanied by the countess of Crèvecœur, were summoned, and heard from Charles of Burgundy, while Louis sat silent and moody, that their union was intended by both princes, to confirm the perpetual alliance of France and Burgundy.

The duke of Orleans had much difficulty in concealing from Louis the joy he felt at the proposal: but, checking his delight, he merely said that his duty compelled him to choose as his sovereign wished.

'Duke of Orleans,' said Louis with sullen gravity, 'I need not remind you that I had proposed for you a match in my own family. But since my kinsman thinks that another marriage is the surest pledge of friendship between his dominions and mine, I love both too well not to sacrifice my own plans.'

The duke of Orleans threw himself on his knees, and kissed the hand that the king, with averted face, extended to him.

Charles next turned to the young countess, and bluntly announced the proposed match to her.

'My lord duke,' said Isabelle summoning up all her courage, 'I observe your commands, and submit to them.'

'Enough, enough,' said the duke, interrupting her; 'I will arrange the rest. Your majesty,' he continued, addressing king Louis, 'shall we chase a wolf this afternoon?'

The young countess saw that she must speak clearly.

'Your grace mistakes my meaning,' she said, speaking timidly yet loudly and decidedly enough to compel the duke's attention. 'I submit to you only those estates that your ancestors gave to mine. I resign these to Burgundy, if you think my behaviour has made me unworthy to hold them.'

'What!' said the duke stamping furiously on the ground, 'does the fool know to whom she speaks?'

'My lord,' she replied still undismayed, 'you have rights only over my lands, and these I offer to return to you. You have no rights over my person, which I intend to remove to the convent, and place under the care of the holy abbess.'

The rage and astonishment of the duke can hardly be conceived. 'It is false!' he cried, 'you have some other secret purpose. My lord of Orleans, she shall be yours, if I drag her to the altar with my own hands!'

The countess of Crèvecœur could keep silent no longer. 'My lord,' she said, 'your language is unworthy. No lady's hand can be disposed of by force.'

'Neither can Orleans,' said Dunois, who was with the king, 'accept with honour a proposal to which the lady has thus publicly objected.'

'Orleans,' interrupted the duke, 'she shall learn that she *must* obey.'

'No, sir,' answered the prince, 'to have been once openly and finally refused, is enough. I will not press my suit further.'

The duke darted one furious glance at Orleans, another at Louis, and the look of secret triumph in the latter's face stung him to further rage.

'Write,' he said to his secretary, 'that I condemn this disobedient and insolent subject to be imprisoned, and her lands to be forfeited.'

There was a general murmur.

'My lord duke,' said Crèvecœur, speaking for the rest, 'think better of this! do not dishonour Burgundy. If the countess has done wrong, punish her, but in the manner that becomes her rank.'

The duke paused a moment, and looked full at his counsellor with the stare of a bull that hesitates whether to obey its driver, or to rush on him and toss him in the

air. He saw, however, that the council agreed with Crèvecœur, and perhaps felt ashamed of his own proposal.

'You are right, Crèvecœur,' he said, 'and I spoke hastily. Listen now: her flight to Liege gave the signal for the bishop's murder; whoever avenges that deed by bringing me the head of the Wild Boar, shall claim her hand. If she refuses him, I can at least grant him her estates, and she may retire into a convent.'

'Think, sir,' said the countess, 'I am the daughter of your father's old and faithful servant. Will you make me a prize for the best swordsman?'

'For your father's sake,' said the duke, 'the prize-winner must be a gentleman by birth, with no stain on his honour: if he is such, he shall at least have the offer of your hand, even though he has neither money nor estates. I swear it.'

Isabelle's remonstrances were drowned in cries of approval. The duke was pleased by the general applause, and his temper began to flow more smoothly.

'I have a wife already,' said Crèvecœur, 'but I long to join in the hunting of that brute, de la Marck.'

'Strike boldly in, Crèvecœur,' said the duke, 'win her, and since you cannot wed her yourself, give her to another—to your nephew, if you please.'

'I trust,' said Dunois, 'that the nobles of France are not excluded from this contest?'

'Heaven forbid, brave Dunois!' answered the duke. 'But,' he added, 'if a Frenchman marries the lady Isabelle, he must become a subject of Burgundy.'

'Enough,' said Dunois; 'I will live and die French. Yet I will strike a blow for the lady.'

The countess of Crèvecœur tried in vain to console Isabelle, who had withdrawn with her. At last the countess whispered that perhaps the successful competitor might be one who found favour in Isabelle's eyes. Love catches at straws; and, while she dwelt on this vague hope, the young countess wept less bitterly.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE MARCH

Few days had passed since Louis had received with a revengeful smile the news that Cardinal Balue was groaning within an iron cage. The forces that the duke had required Louis to bring up, had also appeared: their number was too small to challenge the large army of Burgundy, if such had been the king's purpose, but they were sufficient to protect him against violence. Louis also saw that, at the proper time, he could resume his plan of a marriage between his daughter and the duke of Orleans; and although he felt the indignity of serving with his nobles under the banners of Burgundy and against the people whose cause he had encouraged, he trusted to the future to improve his condition.

Upon a beautiful day towards the end of the harvest, king Louis, surrounded by his nobles and guards, rode out from the gateway of Peronne, to join the Burgundian army, which commenced at the same time its march against Liege.

Most of the great ladies of Peronne attended upon the battlements to see the warriors setting forth. The countess of Crèvecœur, at the express order of Charles, had brought the countess Isabelle.

The knights, as they thronged from the arch, made their horses prance; and the fair crowd of dames and damsels encouraged them with smiles and waving handkerchiefs. The Archer-Guard drew general applause for its gallant and splendid appearance.

As Quentin Durward passed he presented her aunt's letter to the countess of Croye on the point of his lance.

'Now, by my honour,' said the count of Crèvecœur, 'that is too insolent!'

'No, Crèvecœur,' said Dunois, 'he is a gallant lad, and means no harm.'

'You make much of nothing,' said Isabelle blushing; 'it is a letter from my unfortunate aunt. She writes cheerfully, though her situation must be dreadful.'

'Let us hear what the Boar's bride says,' cried Crèvecœur.

The countess Isabelle read the letter in which her aunt

seemed determined to make the best of a bad bargain. Her husband, she said, was one of the bravest men of the age: he had his faults, but they were few. She concluded that she hoped Isabelle would try to escape from Burgundy and come to Liege, where there was an earl ready to marry her.

But while Isabelle read her aunt's letter to her friends, she did not think it worth while to read a postscript in which the countess said that she had put aside a coat that she had been working for de la Marck, as he had determined to have others dressed in his armour in the first action, and himself to wear the arms of Dunois. There was also a slip of paper in another hand, which the countess did not mention: it contained the words, 'If I am not soon famous, conclude that I am dead, but not unworthy.'

Could Quentin possibly slay de la Marck and win her hand? Isabelle wondered. At least, she could now help him in the attempt. Before the troops left Peronne, Quentin Durward received the lady Hameline's note, marked with three crosses opposite to the postscript, and with this remark written upon it, 'He who feared not the arms of Dunois when they were borne by their gallant owner, cannot dread them when displayed by a tyrant and murderer.' Quentin was overjoyed: a way to love and honour seemed open before him. The death of de la Marck at his hand could alone give life to his hopes, and he now held a secret by which to distinguish the Wild Boar in battle.

As for de la Marck's proposed sally, betrayed to Quentin by Hayraddin, the young Scot decided not to conceal what he knew, since the device, unless carefully guarded against, might destroy the besieging army. He further resolved to inform both the princes while they were together, because he felt that to mention so hopeful a scheme to Louis privately, might tempt that monarch to assist, rather than repel, the intended sally.

Meanwhile the march continued and the troops soon entered the territories of Liege. Here some of the Burgundian soldiers, under pretext of avenging the bishop's death, began to plunder and ill-treat the inhabitants. Their conduct did serious harm to the cause of Charles:

the inhabitants, who otherwise might not have interfered, took arms ; cut off small parties from the army on the march ; and falling back on the city, increased the number of its defenders. The French, on the contrary, observed the strictest discipline, by the king's orders : the contrast increased the suspicions of Charles, who saw that Louis's troops behaved like friends of the Liegeois rather than allies of Burgundy.

At length the army arrived before the city of Liege. They found that William de la Marck had totally destroyed the castle of Schonwaldt, and had withdrawn his whole forces into the city, determined to avoid an encounter in the open field.

The invaders soon saw that the Liegeois meant to defend their town desperately. A part of the Burgundian vanguard, thinking they had only to march easily into Liege through the breaches in the walls, entered one of the suburbs with shouts of, 'Burgundy! Kill, kill! All is ours! Remember the bishop!' But as they marched in disorder through the narrow streets, a large body of the inhabitants issued suddenly from the town, attacked them furiously, and killed several. The failing light of evening added to the confusion.

When this news was brought to duke Charles, he was furious with rage. D'Hymbercourt and Crèvecœur begged him to leave the matter to them ; and they succeeded in repulsing the Liegeois, and in rescuing the vanguard, which had lost eight hundred men besides prisoners. D'Hymbercourt then occupied the suburb, and placed guards opposite to the town, from which it was divided by an open space of five or six hundred yards. There was no moat between the suburb and the town, the ground being rocky. There was a gate opposite the suburb, and the wall was pierced by two or three breaches, which had been hastily filled with timber. D'Hymbercourt turned two cannons on the gate, and placed two more opposite the largest breach : he then returned to the duke's army, which he found in great disorder.

The main body and rear of the numerous Burgundian forces had continued to advance, while the broken vanguard was retreating : consequently, all was in confusion. Moreover the night was pitchy black ; heavy rain fell ;

and the ground that the Burgundians occupied, was muddy and cut by many canals. Leaders were separated from their soldiers: every one, from the highest to the lowest, was seeking shelter where he could find it: those who had been wounded in the battle, were calling in vain for help: and those who knew nothing of the disaster, were pressing on to have their share in the sack of the place, which they believed was going on.

When d'Hymbercourt returned, he had immense difficulty in restoring any degree of order. At the same time he secured a small country villa of some wealthy citizen of Liege for the use of the duke and his immediate attendants, and established a guard of about forty men near by.

A little to the left of this villa, and between it and the suburb occupied by the Burgundian vanguard, was another villa surrounded by a garden and courtyard. In this the king of France established his headquarters, protected by his Scottish Guard. The French men-at-arms were stationed close together and in good order.

Meanwhile the king proceeded to the quarters of the duke, to learn what was expected of him. Quentin Durward, hearing that the two princes were together, begged admission, to deliver an important message. Louis was greatly astonished when he heard William de la Marck's plan to make a sally upon the besiegers, under the dress and banners of the French. He would have liked the news to have been told to himself alone, but as the duke had heard it also, he remarked that whether the report was true or false, it was a serious matter. 'I will order my soldiers to wear white scarfs over their armour,' he said, 'to show that they are really French. Kinsman, good night: I will go and arm myself.'

When Louis returned to his quarters, he told Oliver what had passed. 'Think of the Scot's folly,' he said, 'in bringing out de la Marck's plan before Burgundy, Crèvecœur, and all of them, instead of telling it to me secretly, and giving me at least the choice of aiding or defeating it!'

'It is better as it is, sir,' said Oliver; 'there are many with you who would scruple to attack Burgundy undefied, or to ally themselves with de la Marck.'

'You are right, Oliver: there are such fools in the world. For this night at least, Oliver, we must be true men and good allies of Burgundy. Go, tell the men to shoot, in case of need, as sharply on those who cry "France!" in the battle as on any others. I will myself sleep in my armour. Let Crawford place Quentin Durward at the extreme limit of our line of sentinels, next to the city. Let him have the first benefit of the sally that he has announced to us: if he has luck, it is the better for him.'

CHAPTER XXXV

THE SALLY

A DEAD silence soon reigned over the great host that lay before Liege. Overcome with weariness, the scattered soldiers crowded under shelter, or sank down through fatigue upon the ground, to wait for morning. Deep sleep fell on almost all except those who guarded wearily the lodgings of the king and the duke. The dangers and hopes of the morrow were forgotten. But it was not so with Quentin Durward: the knowledge that he alone had the means of distinguishing de la Marck in the contest banished every desire to sleep, and strung his nerves with vigour.

Posted on the extreme point between the French quarters and the town, a good way to the right of the suburb, he gazed into the darkness. and listened with straining ears. But when the huge clocks of the city had sounded three hours after midnight, all was yet silent as the grave.

At length Quentin thought he heard a murmur in the city. He listened: the noise continued, but might be the murmur of a rising wind or perhaps some stream swollen with rain. But when the noise rose louder, and seemed pouring at the same time towards Quentin's own post and towards the suburb, he fell back silently and called his uncle, who commanded a small body of Archers in his rear. All were on their feet in a moment with little noise. Lord Crawford was quickly at their head, and dispatching an Archer to warn the king, drew back his little party behind the light of their watchfire. The rushing sound, which

had approached nearer to them, seemed suddenly to have ceased, but they still heard the more distant heavy tread of a large body of men approaching the suburb.

'There is a strong body between us and the suburb, halting till the others come forward,' whispered Crawford; 'I wish I knew where they are!'

'I will creep forward,' said Quentin, 'and try to discover.'

'Do so, my good lad; but take care.'

Quentin stole cautiously forward until he was certain that he was near a very large body of men, who were standing fast between the king's quarters and the suburb, and that a smaller party was in advance very close to him. Presently two or three from the advanced party approached so near to Quentin, that it was impossible for him to retreat undiscovered. He, therefore, called out, 'On whose side are you?' and was answered, 'Li-Li-ege—I mean, France!' Quentin instantly fired his gun: a man groaned and fell: a vague firing of guns ran along the column, showing it to be very numerous: and the scout hastened back to the main guard.

'Admirably done, my brave boy!' said Crawford. 'Now, men, retire into the courtyard: they are too many for us to engage them in the open.'

They withdrew accordingly, and found the king preparing to mount his horse.

'Where are you going, sir?' said Crawford; 'you are safest here with your own people.'

'I must go instantly to the duke,' said Louis. 'He must be convinced of our good faith, or we shall have both Liegeois and Burgundians upon us at once.' And springing on his horse, he ordered Dunois to command the French troops outside the house and Crawford to defend the villa. He ordered them to bring up four cannons from the rear: in the meantime, they were not to move forward.

During this time the enemy's advance had been delayed because Quentin had fortunately shot the guide of the column, which intended to attack the house occupied by Louis. The column now advanced again.

A close and furious combat had taken place upon the left of the Burgundian army: the attack upon the king's quarters was fiercely maintained in the centre: and a third column of Liegeois, of even superior numbers, had

filed out of a more distant breach in the wall, and had fallen unexpectedly upon the flank of the Burgundians, who, alarmed at the warcries of 'France!' that mingled with those of 'Liege' and 'Wild Boar', made a weak resistance. The duke was beside himself with rage, cursing Louis, and giving orders to shoot at all that were French.

The arrival of the king, attended only by Ludovic Lesly, Quentin, and ten Archers, restored confidence between France and Burgundy. The Burgundian soldiers, encouraged by their leaders, fought fiercely, the duke shouting and hacking in the front like an ordinary man-at-arms.

The scene was now most horrible. On the left, the suburb, after a fierce contest, had been set on fire. In the centre, the French troops kept up a constant fire against immense odds. The battle swayed backwards and forwards, as one side or the other brought up more troops, and the struggle continued furiously for three hours until dawn. The enemy then seemed to be slackening their efforts upon the right and in the centre, and several discharges of cannon were heard from the French headquarters.

'Go,' said the king to Ludovic and Quentin; 'the cannons have come, the villa is safe. Tell Dunois to move this way, but rather nearer the walls of Liege, with all our men who can be spared, and cut in between the Liegeois on the right and the city, from which they are reinforced.'

Dunois and Crawford, when they received the king's orders, joyfully obeyed, and marched across the field, till they gained the flank of the large body of Liegeois by whom the right of the Burgundians had been so fiercely attacked. The increasing daylight showed the enemy still pouring out of the city.

'By heaven!' said old Crawford to Dunois, 'if you were not riding by my side, I would say I saw you among those robbers and townsmen; only that man is bigger than you.'

'The villain wears my arms upon his shield,' said Dunois; 'I will soon punish him for his insolence!'

'I pray you, my lord, leave the vengeance to me!' said Quentin.

'To *you* indeed, young man?' said Dunois; 'that is a modest request. No, I must punish the knave myself.' Then turning in his saddle, he called aloud, 'Gentlemen of France, form your line, level your lances!'

The men-at-arms answered with a loud shout of 'Dunois to the rescue!' and charged at full gallop. The enemy, who were on foot, faced them boldly; the front rank kneeling, the second stooping, and those behind presenting their spears over their heads, they offered a solid front to the rapid charge of the men-at-arms. Few were able to make their way through that iron wall, but among them was Dunois, who, spurring his horse, fairly broke his way into the midst, and made towards his double. To his surprise he found Quentin still fighting by his side.

Dunois's and Quentin's spears were soon broken, but they struck great blows with their long, heavy swords, while they and their horses, armed in complete steel, received little injury from their opponents' lances. They were still struggling to burst forward to him who wore the bearings of Dunois, when the latter, observing the boar's-head and tusks, the usual bearing of de la Marck, in another part of the conflict, called out to Quentin, 'You are worthy to avenge the arms of Orleans! I leave you the task! Ludovic, help your nephew! Let none interfere with Dunois's boar-hunt!'

Quentin joyfully accepted, and each pressed forward upon his separate object.

But at this moment the column that de la Marck had intended to support, when his advance was checked by the charge of Dunois, was put to flight by the Burgundians. The Liegeois fell back on those who were engaged with the French, and the whole rolled back in confusion towards the city-walls, and at last poured into the breach through which the Liegeois had sallied.

Quentin made more than human efforts to overtake his quarry, who was still in sight, striving to renew the battle, and bravely supported by those round him. On the very brink of the breach, de la Marck—for it was he—made a moment's stand against the pursuers. He was covered in blood, which almost effaced the bearings he wore, and had an iron club in his hand, before which everything seemed to go down.

Quentin sprang from his horse and climbed the ruins of the wall to measure swords with the Boar of Ardennes. The latter turned towards him with club uplifted, and they were about to engage when a dreadful shout of triumph,

tumult, and despair announced that the besiegers were entering the city at a point in rear of those who were defending the breach. At the sound, de la Marck summoned his men, and tried in despair, to retreat to a part of the city from which he might escape to the other side of the Maes. His immediate followers, who formed a deep body of men prepared to die in their master's defence, threw themselves across the whole breadth of the street, down which they slowly retired, driving back the pursuers from time to time. Indeed de la Marck might have escaped but for the staunch pursuit of Quentin, Ludovic Lesly, and some of the Archers. Whenever the retiring enemy paused, a furious combat took place between them and the Scotchmen, and Quentin always sought de la Marck; but the latter's present object was to retreat, not to meet the young Scot in single combat. The confusion was general in every direction, and the shrieks of women sounded horribly amid the shouts of battle.

De la Marck, retiring through the appalling scene, had just passed the door of a small chapel, when shouts of 'France! France! Burgundy! Burgundy!' warned him that some of the besiegers were entering the farther end of the narrow street, and that his retreat was cut off. 'Comrades,' he said, 'break through, if you can: with me it is over. But I will send some of these vagabond Scots to hell before me.'

About six of de la Marck's best men remained to perish with their master, and faced the Archers, who were not many more in number. 'The Boar! The Boar! Hola! gentlemen of Scotland,' cried the bold ruffian, waving his club, 'who strikes at the Boar of Ardennes? You, young man, I think, are eager for a trial.'

Quentin only had time to implore his uncle and comrades to stand back, when de la Marck sprung upon him, aiming a blow with his club; but the young Scot leaped lightly aside, and avoided the stroke.

Then they closed. The blows of the despairing robber fell like those of a huge hammer, yet the quick movements and skilful sword-play of the young Archer enabled him to escape and pierce his opponent in return with the point of his weapon. At last de la Marck's huge strength began to give way to fatigue, while the ground on which he stood

was soaked with his blood. Yet the Wild Boar still fought on, and Quentin's victory seemed doubtful, when a female voice behind him called him by his name, crying, 'Help! help! for the sake of heaven!'

He turned his head, and recognized Trudchen, the daughter of Pavillon, the magistrate. Her mantle had been stripped from her shoulders, and she was being dragged along by a French soldier.

'Wait for me only a moment!' exclaimed Quentin to de la Marck, and sprung to Trudchen's aid.

'I wait no man's pleasure,' said de la Marck, beginning to retreat, and glad, no doubt, to be free of his fierce opponent.

'You shall wait mine, though,' said Ludovic, 'I will not have my nephew baulked.' So saying, he instantly attacked de la Marck with his two-handed sword.

Quentin found the rescue of Trudchen could not be effected in a moment, and while he struggled with her captor, he saw his chance of killing de la Marck slipping away. When at length he had freed Trudchen, there was no one near them in the street. He was about to spring away in pursuit of the Boar of Ardennes, when his companion, clinging to him in despair, exclaimed, 'Do not leave me here! As you are a gentleman, conduct me to my father's house, which once sheltered you and the lady Isabelle! For her sake, do not leave me!'

Quentin could not refuse, and, bidding a sad farewell to his gay hopes, he protected Trudchen to Pavillon's house.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE AWARD

Meantime the king and the duke of Burgundy entered the city on horseback through one of the breaches. They dispatched orders to stop the sack of the city and to assemble the scattered troops. The princes then proceeded to the great church, to hold a sort of military council, after they had offered prayers of thanks.

Lord Crawford, busied in collecting his men, met Ludovic Lesly at the turning of one of the streets that lead to the

Maes. The Archer was walking towards the river, holding by its hair a human head.

'What are you doing, Ludovic ?' said his commander.

'This head is all that is left of a bit of work that my nephew began and nearly finished: I put the last touch to it. The good fellow, before he died, prayed me to throw his head into the Maes.'

Crawford looked attentively at the ghastly head. 'By heaven,' he said, 'more depends on that head than you think. You must not throw it in the river. Not a word more! Come with me.'

After praying in the cathedral of Liege, Louis and Charles proceeded to hear the claims of those who had performed especial services in the battle. Many knights claimed the county of Croye and its fair mistress, thinking themselves sure of the rich prize : but they were disappointed, for de la Marck's fate seemed a mystery. Crèvecœur showed a boar's hide such as de la Marck usually wore : Dunois produced a shield with the Boar's bearings : others produced similar tokens.

There was much noise and contest among the competitors, when Crawford pressed forward into the circle, dragging Ludovic Lesly after him, who followed awkward and bashful, as his leader exclaimed, 'Away with your hides and painted iron ! No one save him who slew the Boar, can show his head !'

So saying, he flung on the floor the bloody head, which was instantly recognized by all as that of William de la Marck.

'Crawford,' said Louis, while Charles sat silent in displeased surprise, 'I trust it is one of my faithful Scots who has won this prize ?'

'It is Ludovic Lesly, sir,' replied the old soldier.

'But is he noble ?' said the duke ; 'if he is not of gentle blood, my promise is void.'

'He is a clumsy fellow,' said Crawford, 'but his family is as noble as any in France or Burgundy.'

'Then there is no help for it,' said the duke, 'and the fairest and richest heiress in Burgundy must be the wife of a rough soldier, or die in a convent I have been too rash.'

'Hold an instant,' said Crawford, it may be better

than your grace supposes. My countryman has acted by my advice, and resigns his claim to his nephew, by whom the Wild Boar was actually brought to bay. He too is of noble birth.'

'I will vouch for that youth's services,' said Louis, overjoyed that fate had thrown the prize to one over whom he had some influence. 'His prudence saved us: it was he who gave warning of the night-sally.'

'Then I have hitherto suspected him unjustly,' said Charles.

'And I can swear to his bravery as a man-at-arms,' said Dunois.

'Fortune has throughout declared herself on his side too plainly for us to struggle any further against her,' said Crèvecœur.

'We have yet to inquire,' said Charles thoughtfully, 'what the fair lady's sentiments may be towards this fortunate adventurer.'

'Indeed, your Grace,' replied Crèvecœur, 'I have but too much reason to think that you will no longer find her disobedient! But why should I grudge this youth his preferment? since, after all, it is sense, firmness, and gallantry, which have put him in possession of WEALTH, RANK and BEAUTY!'

Substantiate.

THE END

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